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ME AND MINE

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List of Books by the Author :

AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY (Russia, Siberia, China) (Cheap Edition, 1929).

MAINLY EAST, 1922.

MEXICO AS I SAW IT.

PORFIRIO DIAZ (Seven Times President of Mexico).
(Translated into German and Spanish.)

MEXICO FROM DIAZ TO THE KAISER.

PREFACE TO PRESCOTT'S HISTORY OF MEXICO
(Oxford University Press).

AMERICA AS I SAW IT. (Written originally for the
New York Times.)

HYDE PARK. (Its History and Romance.) (Cheap
Edition, 1930.)

CONTRIBUTOR TO ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.
BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS.

SUNNY SICILY. (Received the thanks of the Italian
Government for help to Sicilian Earthquake
Sufferers.)

THIRTEEN YEARS. (Of a Busy Woman's Life.)

WOMEN THE WORLD OVER.

MY TABLECLOTHS. (A few reminiscences.)

A GIRL'S RIDE IN ICELAND.

THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY.

A WINTER JAUNT IN NORWAY.

WILTON, Q.C. (A novel.)

DANISH v. ENGLISH BUTTER-MAKING.

THROUGH FINLAND IN CARTS. (Translated into
Swedish.)

THE FIRST COLLEGE FOR WOMEN. (Queen's Col-
lege, London.)

GEORGE HARLEY, OR THE LIFE OF A LONDON
PHYSICIAN.

CONTRIBUTOR TO ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF SPORT
AND ISTHMIAN BOOK ON ICE SPORTS.

WOMEN AND SOLDIERS, 1917.

A WOMAN ON FOUR BATTLE FRONTS. (Written
originally for the *Yorkshire Post*.)



A Corner of Venice.

ME AND MINE

A Medley of Thoughts and Memories

by

MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE

Author—Painter—Traveller

*With 12 Coloured Plates and
46 other illustrations*

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers) Ltd.
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*This Book
is Dedicated to the Memory of
my Two Sons*

SQUADRON-LEADER HARLEY ALEC TWEEDIE,
A.F.C., O.B.E. (Mil.), Afghanistan Medal 1919, P.S.C.
(Three War Medals).

Killed in temporary Command of Transjordan, 1926.

and

LIEUTENANT LESLIE KINLOCH TWEEDIE, B.A.,
15th Division, R.F.A. (Three War Medals).

Killed near Ypres, January, 1916.

"How sleep the brave. . . ."

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A few weeks after the Great Earthquake
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ME AND MINE

CHAPTER I

MY HOME IN DEVONSHIRE HOUSE

Here I am again—Masses of jottings—Fate builds my flat—Surprising news in Peking—A tape measure in the Legation Garden—Flat to fit furniture—I'm the first tenant—Oldest inhabitant—Life is still sweet—The hub of the world—An Edison digression—Why Edison succeeded—His gramophone—His Concrete House scheme—A young inventor, J. L. Baird, and Television at 70 miles an hour by train—Old ducal Devonshire House—The Duke's peaches—The joys of home—One's own bath—Treasures from far and near—An orgy of travelling—A spot in the sun—London's beauty—A bruised leg on tour—My son and I stand among the scaffolding—He goes to Transjordan in Command—I go to Paris for my picture show—A telegram.

HERE I am again. If you don't want to hear anything more about me please put "ME" down. I'm only a woman born in Victorian days in luxury and joy, married young with still more luxury and gaiety, and widowed seven years later with my living to earn and two small boys of four and five to educate. A woman who has often been the first to do a thing, and has sometimes been scoffed at in consequence. Yet many of the things I was really the first to do are now so ordinary no one gives them a passing thought.

"ME" is me. Good, bad or indifferent, this book is ME. For this let me at once apologize and if you don't like "ME" or "MINE", just put the pages down and forgive, if you will, the egotism displayed by the title. But as all labels should give an exact description of the object labelled, even in a museum, I cannot equivocate in the matter of the title.

In my possession are literally masses of jottings: the memoranda of thoughts and reflections pencilled down as they came to me in the intervals of writing twenty-three books. Just letters, from known and unknown friends, biographical reminiscences, dull and stupid, interesting or clever; notes made during travels all over the world, with side tracks from

the Himalayas to Central Africa, from Siberia and Manchuria to Java and Malay—indeed a veritable *olla podrida*.

To begin the story: One day in 1923 a little notice in a newspaper caught my eye. Old Devonshire House and its large ducal garden in Mayfair, bordering on Piccadilly, was to be pulled down and flats might possibly be built there instead.

I was then planning my way to Japan, and landed there just after the great earthquake. The flats scheme sounded delightful.

That little advertisement struck my imagination. A corner flat in Piccadilly and Stratton Street (where Baroness Burdett Coutts's parrot had hung in its cage for so many years) would face south and west—a gorgeous view of the two parks and the distant Downs.

Accordingly I wrote to the builders, Messrs. Hannen & Cubitts, and suggested that if the scheme ever materialized, I would like a six-roomed flat on that west front corner, if possible with a balcony, so that when I was an old lady I could sit there in the sun. A reply came that they had received my sporting offer and would bear it in mind, if the scheme materialized; but that in the meantime there was no great likelihood of its doing so.

So off I went. Months and months went by, when one fine day I received a letter in Peking to say that the flats were actually coming into existence. Artesian wells were being sunk and four floors of basements started. Did I wish to have the first refusal of a flat with a balcony?

It would not be cheap, the letter said, as sixteen feet of the Devonshire House site had had to be given up by the new proprietors for the widening of Berkeley Street, and the L.C.C. had taken off the top floor. However, I could BUY as many square feet as I liked and have it "made to order". All this was double Dutch to me, my only clue to its possibilities being that I knew the size of my dining-room carpet, my wardrobes and book-cases. . . .

There in Peking, at the other end of the world, I lay back to visualize the prospect—and felt myself like a storm-tossed ship which is at last approaching the blessed calm of a smiling harbour: the end of an adventurous journey, the end of an orgy of travelling.

I stumped about with my tape measure in the Legation gardens in Peking with the gorgeous white acacia trees in full bloom

in that tropical July heat and measured off passages and rooms, marking the limits by little pebbles. Naturally, I felt that I was a great architect in theory; but it was soon obvious that I was not one in practice. When all had been settled, I felt sure the wardrobes would not go into my bedroom, so I chopped two feet off the bathroom to let them in by making a recess. Another stumbling block was an eight-foot book-case for the library. How was that to be got in when I wanted so many doors? Why, move the fireplace of course. So I did.

* * * * *

To make a long story short, I returned a rough drawing with:

One good sitting-room.

One good bedroom (both facing front).

One small sitting-room with very large rolling doors
on to the front sitting-room.

One small bedroom.

One tiny kitchen (as there was to be a Restaurant in
the new building).

One small bathroom.

And lots of cupboards.

Those four rooms were the smallest possible accommodation I could do with—after living in a sixteen-roomed house—in what it pleased me to think would be a spot in the Sun.

In fact, truth to tell, I designed the flat to hold my old family treasures. And the wonderful thing is that it actually turned out all right—small but compact.

I dreamed and dreamed of that flat by land and sea for another year; pictured my surviving son and myself inviting all our friends to that roof-garden; foresaw the moonlight parties and fun on the heights above Piccadilly, and wondered if I was being rash and perhaps could not afford to live there at all. Well, well, I had ordered it, and must trust to luck following pluck as it so often does.

Three years later and I was actually living in Devonshire House as the very first tenant. So I am now its oldest inhabitant.

* * * * *

Thus it is that this book has been written in my fourth home, my fourth "permanent" home, that is, for I have had literally *hundreds* of temporary addresses in all parts of the

world. I couldn't have had more if I had been running away from money-lenders. The first home, Harley Street, "London, Eng.", as the American would say, I was born into ; the second, York Terrace, Regent's Park, I was married into ; the third, Whitehall Court, I was hurled into by the war after the death in France of my younger son, Leslie ; and my fourth present home, where I am now writing high above the roofs and tree-tops of Mayfair and St. James's, I have flown into, like a nest in which a much-buffed bird-of-passage perches after years and years of alarms and excursions, of comedies and tragedies . . .

Life is sweet and life is good. Each day brings its own fresh interests, and I love to bask in the sunshine of life's friendships and humanities. There is always pleasure in remembrance ; in the recollection of happy, or even of sad, incidents which have flowered and faded . . .

Often one of the most difficult duties with a book, or a baby, is the christening. I have not selected "ME" because I think there is anything wonderful about myself ; but because, so far as I am aware, there is no other book of an autobiographical character with that title.

* * * * *

Well, here I am. In the hub of the world, yes, in the heart of the Empire. Set like an eagle high above the busiest corner of the busiest thoroughfare of the busiest capital in the world, with superb views from the windows across London and its river to the Surrey Hills—views which, for beauty and variety, are unsurpassed—and I know most of the great capitals of the world—unsurpassed by those from windows in any other city.

The history of our vast Empire lies below where the Romans landed nearly 2,000 years ago.

In my flat, higher than the surrounding roof-tops, one doesn't hear noise, nor does one get fog. Fog in London—and fogs are rare with us nowadays—does not rise above eighty feet. Therefore, the balcony does not get fog.

And what a sight opens to view from that balcony.

None can conceive the marvels of this view—to the left the L.C.C. New County Hall, Big Ben, three hundred and twenty feet high, whose sonorous chimes are heard all over the world, as they announce Greenwich time, and near by the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the Westminster Town Hall, Queen Anne's Mansions, the towers and turrets of Whitehall,

Westminster Cathedral, whose bell only tolls on the death of the Pope or a royal personage; in the middle distance the roof tops and chimneys of Battersea and Chelsea. And below, set like a giant doll's-house on a green floor, Buckingham Palace, with the Queen Victoria Memorial looking as though it has just dropped from the skies. A royal Prince, standing on my balcony, suddenly exclaimed: "There's Granny". Seven miles away, the glass mirrors of the Crystal Palace glint in the sunshine and the Kent Hills and the Downs are beyond. One might see Paris if the world were not round.

Surely, no city in the world has such a skyline as London; nor such romance and history to offer the ready ear and the seeing eye.

The construction of the present Devonshire House was one of the greatest building feats of the age. Nearly two thousand men, working day and night, built it in eighteen months. There are in all seventy flats, each containing from four to twenty rooms. Heat is conducted even through marble bathroom floors, and there is heat in the walls as the Romans had it two thousand years ago, and as was used in the house of Livia on the Palatine. These outside walls of Portland stone, which are not "faced", but real stone, represent a real building triumph.

* * * * *

Writing of the building of Devonshire House reminds me of another architectural achievement in 1912 in the U.S.A., when I spent Christmas Eve with that great inventive genius, Thomas Edison, at home at Orange, New Jersey, on my way to South America.

Edison was, of course, one of the most remarkable men of the century, and one of the most remarkable things about this remarkable man was that he investigated phonographic radio although he was almost stone deaf.

His library was to me an extraordinarily uninteresting place. There was nothing grand nor imposing about it, nor even workmanlike; many private houses have far finer libraries. But tucked away in one of the alcoves between bookcases was a small trestle bed—a mighty simple sort of a bed, a comfortless sort of a bed at the best; and on this small couch this giant among world-workers threw himself down when utterly worn out by activity, to snatch an hour or two of sleep.

Edison was always an amazing worker. Twenty-four hours

on end day after day did not wear him out, and he had been known to go for sixty hours without sleep.

No detail was too trivial for his attention.

"Why have you succeeded?" I asked this one-time Scotch-Dutch newspaper boy.

"By one per cent inspiration," he replied, "and ninety-nine per cent perspiration."

Edison had amazing physique or he could never have worked as he did, and he must have had marvellous brain power or he could never have perfected so many inventive achievements, numbering in all over a thousand patents.

He was a man of medium height, and when I saw him, quietly dressed in a blue serge suit. His eyes were blue, cheery, hopeful and, at moments, thoughtful; they were his most characteristic feature. He had a fresh complexion and long, lank, unruly, grey hair, almost white hair in fact.

Although Edison had not such a fine head as his rival and friend, Hiram Maxim, he had the same blunted tops to his fingers that I have so often noticed in inventors. He was not commanding in appearance. He was, in fact, a kindly, clever, easy-mannered man who would not excite curiosity in any way. But although absorbed in his work, he was not onesided, as I soon learned. He read his daily papers with avidity and he had positive ideas on the busy questions of the day. So the great inventor was a man of parts as well as of scientific concentration.

Soon after my arrival I was taken to a small workroom by Edison's right-hand man, Mr. Meadowcroft (born in Manchester). In this wonderful place was a model of Edison's concrete house scheme. This model cost a fifth of the price of ordinary houses. It was fire-proof and vermin-proof; and was to be made in an iron mould riveted together. In fact, two tin jelly moulds—one inside the other—will give an idea of the scheme. In this way a duplicate house within a house, a space of a few inches being left between the two, were to be joined together; bath, sink, everything, including the chimneys, to be on the moulds. Into this model the concrete was to be poured through the chimney stacks.

"I'll make a concrete house in six hours, and in four or five days it will be dry, and you can live in it in a week," said Edison when I met him. "Sixty per cent of the plant is ready, and I'm going to complete the rest shortly. In Holland they are

already making such houses—but they take two days about it.”

“That does not seem much waste of time, when one is going to live in it all one’s life,” I remarked.

He laughed.

“They will be especially useful in industrial communities,” he continued, “where the frame can be moved from one site to another, and a whole town run up quickly.”

That was nearly twenty years ago when New York was covered with several feet of snow. I well remember the warmth of his handshake of welcome. . . . Later on I remember a youth bending over an ordinary mahogany-enclosed gramophone, attending to the cylinders, while an elderly man sat on a very old common wooden chair beside it. The latter was holding his right hand to his ear which was encircled by his thumb and first finger, while the little finger was against the wood of the gramophone. The reason for this was to help transmit the sound to the ear.

He did not hear me enter. He was intent on the song and kept his head closely glued to the machine.

At the end of the verse the grey-headed man straightened himself :

“Rotten, rotten,” he exclaimed.

So said Thomas Edison, who was trying to get rid of the buzzing sound in gramophones.*

* * * * *

Let us turn for a moment from an old inventor to a young one knocking at the door. J. L. Baird is one of the interesting people of the day and his name is associated with Television. I met him first just after my return to civilization in my new home in Devonshire House (1926).

“You are Scotch,” I said to the pink-faced, blue-eyed, obstreperously fair-haired young man of thirty-two.

“Yes, I’m from Glasssgoww,” he replied. “Mi faither’s a Scotch Meenister near Glasssgoww.” (Will he forgive my attempt at a Scotch accent, I wonder ?)

“So you were born in a Manse. Well, I had two relations Moderators of the Church of Scotland, Professor William Milligan of Aberdeen, a great friend of Queen Victoria and father of the famous doctor, Sir William Milligan of Manchester, and the Very Rev. George Milligan of Glasgow.”

* This account appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* in October, 1931, just after his death.

"Aye, that's fine," he said in a broad accent.

"And how did you take to Science?"

"I dinna know. It just came. I can't get away from it."

Years of struggle and work in London finally turned Baird's Television into a company. That Christmas he went up to spend at the Manse.

"Was your father delighted?" I asked.

"He didn't say much. 'How are you getting on?' he asked.

"'I've been made into a company.'

"'You a company? Weal, weal, I wish your mother had lived to know that, my lad. And to think all those wires and things you used to play about with in the Manse garden are now a company. Weal, weal.' And then he turned back to his Greek book."

"How strange," I said. "You inherited his inquiring mind, and yet his Greek books are as mysterious to you as your wires are to him, while there is similarity of purpose and investigation in both of you. Neither understands in the vaguest way the work or interest of the other."

Really one feels abnormal minds, brains and talents ought to be mothered in some way by the State. Great painters, musicians, writers, inventors—those people who are enriching the world—should be looked after and not allowed to fall into the hands of every shark ready to gobble up their brains. No man or woman of genius should be left to starve as so many are. There should be a British Nobel prize, not for success attained, but for likely success to be fostered. If I were rich, I would endow such a scheme and get a committee together for each of the subjects and arts to go into the question of qualifications. Then give the youth or maid a small income and a small guarantee for experiments to be revised each year according to success attained.

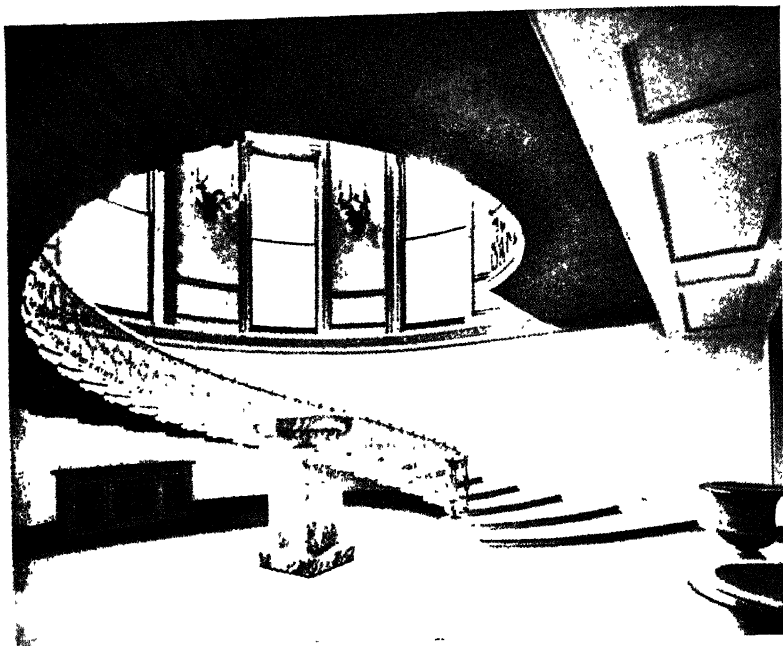
Them's my sentiments, as they say.

The day will come when we shall sit at home and look at pictures, just as we now sit at home and listen to music or speeches from every quarter of the globe. Baird's Television has already been put on at our largest music-hall in London, and also in Berlin and Brussels. One day we shall see the House of Commons sitting on a screen, and hear every speaker at the same time as we see his movements. We shall see and hear a whole play reproduced direct from the stage. We are only at

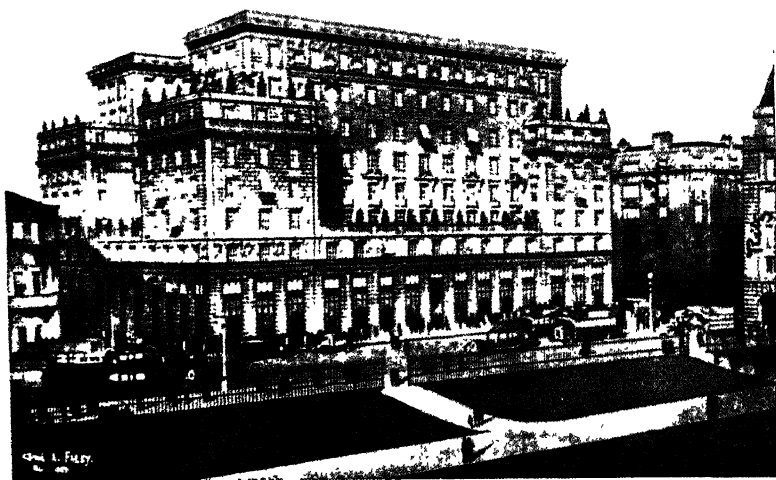


The Author's last portrait.

[Vandyk



The famous Crystal Hanging Staircase used by the former Dukes of Devonshire.



[By kind permission of Hannen & Cubitts
New Devonshire House, built 1926. Author's flat marked with x x x

the beginning of Television, just as we were at the beginning of marconigrams when Marconi sent me one of the very first six messages that ever crossed the ocean thirty years ago.

It is quite possible that shortly we shall be able to see the Derby, Henley, the opening of Parliament, Ascot or any other great function reproduced in colour and movement and speech direct from the scene itself. The "large screen" is already there. Who knows but that through John Baird the day may come when we shall see who is speaking to us, and how they are speaking to us on the telephone.

Television is already moving at seventy miles an hour. How? Well, a broadcast from Brookmans Park B.B.C. station has been made to a train moving at that pace, on a four valve portable receiver, by the Baird Televisor. A dancer in Long Acre could be seen by people on the moving train. So we may soon hear a music-hall singer and see her, too, as we travel up or down to Town daily. Who can tell?

And all this was invented by a young Scotchman.

On the original site of Devonshire House, three hundred years ago, there was a mediæval homestead, Hayhill Farm, whose fields extended over the region covering what is now Berkeley Square and Lansdowne House. The name survives to-day in Hay Hill, the ascent from Berkeley Street to Dover Street. Probably the hay from the farmlands was sold in the Haymarket and Pall Mall.

In the seventeenth century people had already begun to move westward from the city and so it came about that Lord Berkeley of Stratton bought the farm and erected thereon Berkeley House. This residence, after about eighty years, was destroyed by fire in 1773, but its place was soon taken by Devonshire House. The new building had been bought in 1698 by William Cavendish, the first Duke of Devonshire (who has been described as "the finest and handsomest gentleman of his time") and its loss, when it was gutted by fire, was estimated at £30,000—a large sum in those days. The new house cost over £20,000 and received further embellishments from successive Dukes. Probably no other house or ducal mansion in London has had such great traditions, political and social, as old Devonshire House. The dinners, receptions and gorgeous fancy dress balls given there were sumptuous, and through several generations it was a rallying ground for aristocratic society. Here was the

centre of an historic period which is now ended and which can never be revived.

Curiously enough, I had an intimate family recollection of the old Devonshire House. My two sons, Harley and Leslie, when very small boys, were taken by their uncle, Dr. Vaughan Harley, of Harley Street, to see the coronation of King Edward VII by the special invitation of the late Duke of Devonshire. His Grace, who was then in residence, said to my brother, who was his medico: "You had better come along and have a look at the procession from Devonshire House. I am putting a stand up, and I shall be delighted if you will join us. You haven't got a wife, have you? Or you could bring her too."

"No," replied Vaughan, "I have no wife and no time to get married, but I have two little nephews; two small boys might not take up more room than one big wife."

"Bring them along," he replied.

Accordingly the two young people were washed and scrubbed and put into their best and went off in great excitement hand in hand with Uncle Vaughan.

When they returned it was soon made clear that the thing that impressed them most that day was the Duke of Devonshire's emergence from his gorgeous carriage on his return from the Abbey. He was so entangled, it seemed, by his voluminous robes that the footmen had literally to extricate His Grace from their folds as he descended from the magnificent vehicle. The boys thought the Duke looked "wonderful" in his red coat with white bands round the shoulders and his decorations.

Both talked at once to say how marvellous the procession had been—and the horses and the flags, and the trumpets *and the peaches*.

"Oh, Mum, the peaches were as big as a baby's head."

I am not at all sure that the peaches had not actually made more impression than anything else. They evidently were of an enormous size and had been specially grown and sent from Chatsworth.

It transpired that about the middle of the entertainment, when Uncle Vaughan had already assisted them to two apiece, the Duke himself came in and said:

"Now, then, youngsters, have some peaches."

"They have had some," said my brother. "In fact, I am ashamed to tell you they have had two each."

"Never mind. Have two more," and thereupon His Grace seized four and dumped two each on the small boys' plates.

Now, all these years afterwards, I have come to live in one of the flats built on the very spot where those seats were built for King Edward's coronation, in front of that famous old Devonshire House where my boys ate the peaches.

* * * * *

It was in China and Japan in 1923 that I began to dream dreams of making a new home for myself and for my son Harley when he should be in London. My mind often wandered back to England.

Never to speak to a soul for days on end is not hilarious for the traveller. Only to be a number in an hotel is not exhilarating; and yet, beyond a few words with the lift-boy to encourage him to learn English, or an inquiry at the post office for stamps, or at a bootmaker's about a rubber heel—such days have been far too numerous in my life. Mine has been an increasingly lonely existence for years, and yet I can truly say it has never been dull or bored. No one can be dull with books and papers, with eyes and ears; but it is bad for any of us to live much alone. Luckily there are delightful people everywhere who have seized upon one with cars and houseboats; opened lovely homes and proffered wondrous hospitality which has been so showered upon this wanderer that life has often been made a wonder-dream. God bless them. . . . Yet it seemed in far away Japan to be too good to be true, after four years of wanderings, to be really going back to my very own bathroom (for even bathrooms attached to one's bedroom in hotels abroad are not like one's very own). Going back to cupboard doors and drawers that open with one finger and slip back to their places without herculean effort, going back to wardrobes so full of pegs and hangers that there would be room for everything. Yes, going back to one's own writing-table, with a whole drawer for addresses, and little memorandum and address books for:

Far East	..	..	dark blue.
Middle East	..	..	scarlet.
Paris	..	..	black.
Canada and U.S.A.	..	..	purple.
London	..	..	a huge one for London.
Country	..	..	brown.
Europe	..	..	pale blue.
General	..	..	green.

reposing for four years in a London warehouse. Going back to receptacles for note-paper of every wanted size, to be always at hand, and not necessitating constantly having to run out to buy large envelopes or more ink or a tube of vaseline.

Going back to the old wooden Norwegian beer-mug that Nansen gave me, full of string, and to all one's dear little old-maidy joys.

Going back to one's old book-shelves.

Going back to family tea-services and Queen Anne tea-pots and coffee-pots. It seemed too wonderful.

* * * * *

Bruised and shaken I had entered China, owing to a Siberian railway accident and, ridiculous to relate, many months later, bruised again I left China. The Siberian railway accident had skinned my arm and badly hurt my leg by throwing me from my bunk on to the obtruding locks of suitcases that had descended when the impact came. Those injuries remained for months. The reason I left China bruised was the honesty of purpose and vigour of foot-polish of good Chinese servants, who, in the interval between receiving European guests, apparently polish the floors. They were the "Boys" of Lord Li Ching Fong, son of China's greatest statesman, Li Hung Chang. For a month he lent me his gorgeous house in Shanghai.

A fall in the dark down a whole flight of uncarpeted highly-polished wooden stairs left bruises and strains, and water on the knee that evoked a somewhat devastating remark from the doctor, when I said :

"After twelve days surely that wretched leg should not be black and blue and swollen like that ?"

"My dear lady, it will take twelve weeks, perhaps twelve months before it is well—and I much fear your travelling off alone like this, even by Canada. Through the tropics would, of course, be unthinkable."

"But I must go. I have proof-sheets to correct on the way home."

"I know, I know, but it would have been better for you to have broken it, as such a fall deserved, after the Siberian damage, so be careful."

Alone I started, quite unable to walk, with a stiff bandaged leg, by Japan and Canada—half round this world, in fact—to London and managed to bring the leg—so nearly left in China—back with me.

My son in the R.A.F. had been ordered to the Middle East,

hence my hurried journey home, and there were proof-sheets waiting to be corrected—proof-sheets of “An Adventurous Journey”.*

The new Devonshire House was actually up. The roof was on. The windows of my flat were not in, no doors were in place, and none of the eight lifts was ready. But the great effort had to be made. My son and I had to visit our future home together.

* * * * *

So came the day when I dragged that poor damaged leg up seven flights of stone stairs and stood with Harley among the roofless walls, covered over by tarpaulins. We stood among loose planks of wood and tubs of cement. But we gasped at the view, at the wonderful scene before us as we stepped through holes that would one day be french-windows, and stood on the asphalt roof-garden-to-be.

“Can I afford to live in it?” I almost gasped.

“You must,” he exclaimed. “I shall think of you when I am in the Middle East, perched up here. You must, *you must*. It is simply wonderful. And I shall look forward to coming home to see you living here with all your treasures.” And laughing, he continued. “How well I remember Leslie and I eating all those peaches that day Uncle Vaughan brought us to see King Edward’s coronation from the stand in the garden which must have been directly under where you and I are now standing. How old Leslie would have loved to see you here. Wasn’t it in the Devonshire House Garden he was fitted for his Red Cross uniform five days after war was declared? Poor old Leslie.”†

Harley was very busy. Glad to go back to service, although he had thoroughly enjoyed every minute of four years attached to the Air Ministry or at Geneva, then so full of hope and promise. He was getting new uniform and service kit, revolver, rifles, guns, a saddle, tennis racquets, and dozens of little things necessary for an out-of-the-world corner like Amman.

A few days afterwards he was gone.

* * * * *

Having seen my son happily off to Transjordan to take up his new position in Temporary Command of that somewhat disturbed land, I packed myself and my silly old leg off to Bath for a “cure”. The leg had been conveyed from China across the Pacific to Japan and Vancouver, across Canada by rail

* Now in a cheap edition at 3s. 6d. (Butterworth).

† Leslie had been killed near Ypres with the Artillery just ten years before (1916).

and across the Atlantic by boat, but after nine months it had not learnt to behave itself, so to Bath it had to be taken to be more electrified and coaxed back to usefulness.

Harley had been very full of his new life as we drove away. He was deeply regretting leaving Geneva before the Disarmament Conference had reached a more advanced stage after assisting at it from its inception as the only British airman, and yet glad of the relaxation from such a long-drawn-out single-handed responsibility.

"This will be a three years' job probably, so you must come out and see me after you've got everything comfortably settled up here." And so we chatted on over luncheon and coffee. How vividly one recalls the scene.

How little we guessed the future.

* * * * *

So a few days later I took that still troublesome leg to Bath, prior to going to Paris with a hundred and fifty sketches from which the Galeries Georges Petit could choose a hundred for my first exhibition there.

Eight weeks later I was leaving Bath for Paris by Southampton-Havre as the easiest route, all packed and ready to start, when a telegram was handed to me.

MY SON WAS DEAD.

Killed flying in Transjordan.

* * * * *

That was all. Six weeks after reaching his Command in Transjordan, his machine went up in flames. One son had been blown to his death in a front observation Artillery trench in France, and now the elder had lost his life in the air for his country. . . .

So this was the end. The last possible blow had fallen. I felt numbed and cold and dazed. But the hotel bus was at the door. So I went to Southampton. April, 1926.

That Sunday morning in the Paris *Daily Mail* I read the details. In the evening in Paris I read well-nigh a column in the London *Observer*. It was all finished—my last son was dead—yes—and according to Eastern custom already buried. He and I would never stand together again on the roof-garden of the flat we had chosen together in Devonshire House.

DEAD.

THAT WAS ALL.—DEAD.



Hawaii--The most terrible Volcano in the World. Eleven Fire Pits

CHAPTER II

"THE LADY WITH THE FLAT"

A comforting canary—No bath-chair for me yet—Roses on the balcony—Horticulture above Piccadilly—New thoughts and new vigour—The halt and the maimed—The nights of London—"The lady with the flat"—Speechifying—Alone at the Old Vic—My name on the wall—All sorts of speeches—Baldwin—Jix—Haldane—The Prince of Wales—Time for everything—Deafening drill in Piccadilly—Thousands of men—New London—Lavish Luxury—Colliding with the Prince of Wales—A step back into the past—Presentation at the Old Victorian Court—Blue invitation card—Thousands in the Mall—Curtseys and nervousness—I was a Victorian Miss and not a pre-war Bachelor girl—A jump forwards—How the Mexican oil was found—The greatest caves in the world—Mexico and mystery—My bodyguard—Two hundred candles—Awe-inspiring and terrible—In rushes a soldier—What a wonderful telegram—Seven thousand miles across land and sea—Historic news.

HAVE you, dear reader, ever been at the goods station of a railway line and seen the mountains of cases and packages of all sizes and description being sorted out for forwarding to their destinations? If so, you may have noted barrels and wooden boxes marked "Returned Empty". Well, that description could have been applied to me, mentally and bodily, when I came back to London after my Exhibition in Paris in the summer of 1926. . . . I very nearly never returned. . . .

Just a little yellow bird taught me how lonely my life had become. Now for the first time in the whole of my existence I had no one living with me, either entirely or for long spells. No one writing me letters every week, no one to whom I wrote letters every week. No one who had their own bedroom in my home. How utterly alone one can be with one's life-long arm-chairs and carpets, every one of which brings forth in stray moments some phase of one's past.

The tables and wine-glasses and mustard-pots sat there as ghosts of a very full past life, and one felt the loneliness sometimes.

That canary changed it all. He sang his morning song of welcome with the first streaks of daylight. He was always there. Always cheery and happy and responsive to every remark

with his dear little yellow head perched on one side and his knowing look if he saw a bit of sugar or lettuce.

That tiny mite was something human, something alive and responsive. God bless him. I have learned to love that dear little fluffy yellow human atom. And the sun, and the flowers.

And all the friends.

A haven. A veritable haven for a woman who has worked for her living and had such a busy life.

Perhaps now I can settle down quietly and "grow old gracefully" as the poets say.

Nearly 20 years ago I put in a book "I might now retire to a bath-chair and a quiet corner". My dear old mother was very angry when she saw it in print. "How could you say that?"

"For fun."

"That is no fun. Readers of books don't know the authors, and if you tell them you are sitting in a bath-chair they will just believe you are." This time I can tell them Vichy finished the leg cure after twelve months, so I need not take to that bath-chair yet, perhaps not for another 20 years.

Having earned and saved the money to *buy* the flat, the first year it took me all my pennies to get into it and settle down. I do not like debts. If I cannot pay for a thing I just go without it. The second year I saved up the pennies and built a little greenhouse. Living at the top corner of Piccadilly and Stratton Street there was plenty of fresh air. But when there was a gale it was exactly like living in a lighthouse. Some delightful advertisement announced that little greenhouses could be bought for £20. Lovely. Submitted the picture to Hannen & Cubitts, the builders, who nearly had a fit.

"Why, it is only made of light wood and would blow into Buckingham Palace garden."

Collapse of poor Me. So plans had to be drawn out and brick and cement and iron brought into requisition to put up the dear little greenhouse. And then we formally laid the foundation stone with all pomp, and put in the required coins, minus the golden sovereign, because there had been no golden sovereigns since the War.

Eleven camellias and two Marechal Niel roses were sent by friends and bloomed in that greenhouse. Lamps from all parts of the world with coloured lights which shine in full brilliance on my moonlight party nights, hang from the glass roof—a real

dream spot in which to lounge, to read or sip coffee. Health and pleasure come from watering and tending the flowers. With both sons gone, to keep sane one had to find something new, and every little thing counts that will divert one's mind from recurring tragic recollections.

Horticulture did it. Flowers and bird life—the latter in the form of the little yellow canary.

New interests are the finest tonic in the world. New ideas come from tiny seeds, and bring about a fresh and refreshing life. I, who knew nothing of gardening, became enthusiastic. Watered the privets until they grew into a veritable hedge in a hundred and twenty-five feet of window-boxes. Put in bulbs and saw them push out their little heads.

Yes, new thoughts, new vigour came with the paint-box, fresh vision came with the canary, and different occupation with the flowers; altogether they brought mental tonic. The little greenhouse was filled and is kept filled by kind friends and is, in fact, a wonderful bower of remembrance.

Some of these flowers have blossomed from seeds that grew in remote or distant corners of the world, seeds that I brought back with me from my long wanderings to plant and water on a Piccadilly balcony, seeds sent from Embassies overseas.

A few of these seeds I sent one day to Sir George Hastings at the Ranelagh Club.

"Thank you very much for the sample of grass," he replied, "which I have handed out to be planted." Grass, indeed. Why, the seeds were from the sacred Bo-Tree of Japan. The seeds grew old and withered but the tree never appeared. . . .

"You'll never be old," is said to me constantly. Sometimes I wonder why. Mind and body must wear out in time, more especially one would imagine in those who have lived and worked every moment of their lives.

But on thinking it over, I believe those that say it are right. Anyone who is vital, alive, observant, interested, can never become moribund or comatose. But that does not say that many people do not exhaust one's vitality, that many of the dearest people are terrible vampires who suck and live on all that is best in others. Never giving anything of themselves to anyone, not in the least realizing they are sapping the very life's blood out of the people they care for, and leaving them reduced to pulp. So I go and sit with the halt and the sick, and the old and the lonely, and try and cheer up their less

blessed lives by telling them stories, and never mentioning sickness or anything sad. Those are the only calls I ever make.

Up here on the seventh floor, surrounded by creature comforts, I am in a veritable haven for a travel-tossed, returned wanderer. My own lovely spring-bed without fearsome tropical bugs; no mosquitoes to bite one's nose, no tarantulas to crawl down the walls. No snake under the bed. Tea and *The Times* at 7 a.m., both enjoyed in peace. No soapsuds from other people's baths to detract from a bath of ever-hot water.



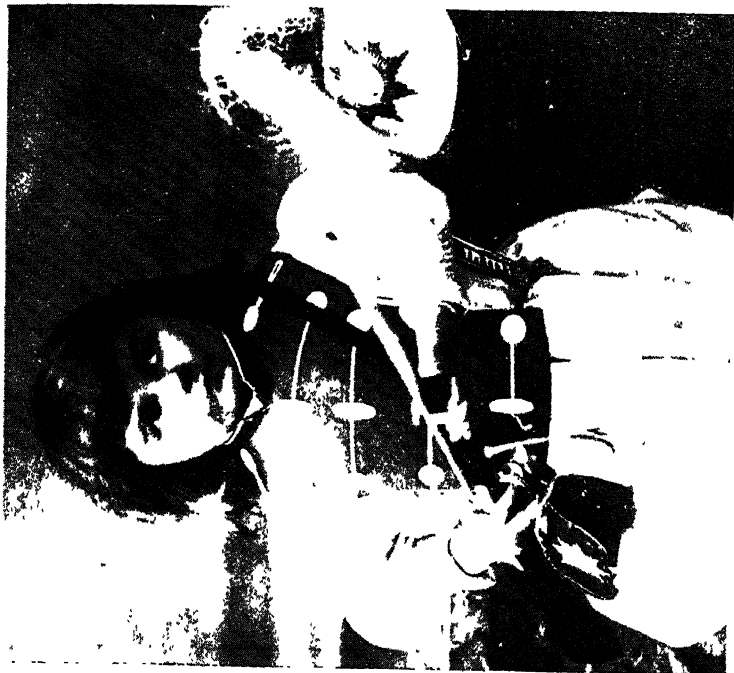
Reading a paper

Bliss. Peace.

Happiness after years and years of work and travel. No dining-room breakfast at 8.15 to see a husband off to the City and despatch the children to school—though at the time it had its joys.

And outside, the finest skyline in the world.

The marvels of the view are a recurrent joy when I open the windows and look out.



Leslie, the baby soldier.



The babies off for a walk with the black cat



These wooden pipes, made from solid tree trunks, were used to conduct the water of London for two hundred years (about 1720) and were dug up at the corner of Stratton Street and Piccadilly when Piccadilly was relaid in 1927

To those of us who live in the heart of a great city there is a period of silence at night which is rather wonderful. The noise of the busy town slowly, gradually subsides. The honks of motor-horns die away. The roar of traffic has ceased, the last of the myriad omnibuses has gone home, its human freight has disappeared indoors and the city becomes enfolded in the mantle of night. Not even the 3 a.m. cock-crows and cackling fowls or the nocturnal hoots of the owl or the baying of the moon by dogs or the full-throated twittering of the song birds, which are the concomitants of life in the country. How rich England is in song birds. In France and Italy they have practically all been shot for the family casserole. In the East though the birds are gorgeously plumaged they rarely emit any song, for the lively iridescence of their shining breasts does not cover musical throats. In the Tropics the shades of eve bring too often a sultry unrefreshing warmth, bullfrogs unite in deafening chorus, native tom-toms thump till dawn, and mosquitoes keep up their continual blood-thirsty buzz. At sea one's body rocks in unison with the ship's motion, and in the Arctic cold of Siberia the weight of the bedclothes, in a room which is almost hermetically sealed to keep out the freezing winds, makes slumber a wearisome process.

No. No. Give me the nights of London, the calm, sweet, glorious, reposeful nights of London, all the more appreciated after the roar of day.

* * * * *

How many times have I been asked: "Are you the lady with the flat?" Good heavens, have I descended to this? Thirty-five years of public and private work and only to be known as "the lady with the flat".

However, the two following descriptions of the flat give a far more vivid impression of it (and of its hostess) than I could ever aspire to achieve. The first was sent to me from *Home Notes* and the second opened a weekly number of *London-Opinion*. How kind they both were:

A FLAT WITH A VIEW

One of the most romantic flats in London, both in its furnishings and the marvellous view to be seen from its roof garden, belongs to Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, the noted writer, painter and traveller. Four years ago, when travelling in the East, she heard that the block of flats, now known as Devonshire House, were to be erected and straightway "booked" the highest flat on the corner of Stratton Street and Piccadilly. Her foresight and patience have been well rewarded, for her four-roomed flat is one of the most delightful homes any woman could possess. Within, it is full of lovely things gathered on her travels: Persian

rugs, tapestries, lanterns from Damascus and her own paintings of Eastern scenes. From the wide stone balcony, which she has transformed into an adorable little garden, one looks down on a fairy city of Palace roofs, church spires, green parks, and all the multi-coloured jumble of ancient and modern which is London.

WORLD TRAVELLER AND HOME-LOVER

Though she has travelled all over the world and has wide social and artistic interests, Mrs. Alec-Tweedie is passionately "house proud"—and proud of it. She confesses that she thinks cooking a dinner, and trimming a hat well, are far more important than writing a book or painting a picture, and that if she could begin life over again, she would learn domestic work from the very beginning. One of her pet maxims is that the most honourable of all working women is the home-maker.



My first public work was when Lady Aberdeen persuaded me to convene and take the chair at the Agricultural Section of the International Council for Women, 1899. Sketched by Harry Furniss for *The Gentlewoman*.

Here is another kindly Press notice of my movements in

HIGH LIFE

Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, the authoress and traveller, moves more in high life than anyone else I know. Her handsomely appointed flat is at the summit of Devonshire House with an admirable view across the Park and glimpse of the Royal garden. There is a balcony outside the window of the lounge that

she has converted into a bower of flowers, and to stand up there on a clear sunny morn is a rich and lovely experience.

Although the flat is but one of hundreds of homes in the same building, Mrs. Tweedie determined to invest it with an air of separateness. She got the architect to give her flat its own foundation in stone, and when it was laid gave a party and with mock solemnity inserted a card, several coins, two or three hairpins and other feminine bric-à-brac. It is comforting to consider that when Macaulay's New Zealander steps among the ruins of London he will find Mrs. Tweedie's visiting card—a posthumous act of courtesy that he must surely appreciate.

* * * * *

For the first day of December I find I have this note :

"Three months since I set foot in dear old London ; to start my fourth and last home. Painful months spent in unpacking the belongings of two sons, who gave their lives for the country, amid surroundings of the coal strike, and slackness of every kind of work and workmanship ; men trying to lose in a decade the great Empire built up by their forbears a hundred years or more ago.

Speeches. Yes, I could have spoken and lectured every day, aye, and twice a day, had I accepted one of the kindly invitations showered upon me.

Everybody seems to think I should love to hear my own voice on all my travels, now that I am home and settled down. No, thank you. I funk it, positively funk it. . . . Yet I did once agree to give a lecture.

However did I do it ? I look back on that little long ago episode and wonder. Driving up to the Old Vic in a hansom cab, I saw before me an enormous placard announcing that MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE WOULD GIVE A LECTURE ON ICELAND WITH SLIDES THAT AFTERNOON.

It was not a modest insignificant little poster. Oh, dear no, it was a great big enormous thing, several feet wide and tall. However, there it was. I had promised to give a lecture for that wonderful woman, Miss Cons, so do it I must.

After a little chat with Miss Cons in her small uncomfortable private room I was marched on to the stage.

Now, the stage at the Old Vic was of very great proportions and the audience numbered over seventeen hundred. It was simply packed that Sunday afternoon, as it always was, and Iceland, I suppose, was a bit of a novelty to them. Anyway, there I stood alone with a sort of music stand in front of me on which were some sort of notes, for I had promised my father I would not read as he assured me after his vast experience it was better to speak badly straight to the audience, than to

read well straight to the paper. How true those words were.

For an hour I chattered, for I can only call it chattering, showing my pictures, and the audience called: "Go on."

It really is a pretty terrifying experience to stand alone in such a vast space. To act on the stage is quite a different thing, one is dressed for the part, there are tables and drop-scenes and an orchestra and everything suggestive of that unreality which is required of a theatre. But one human unit alone with an equally large audience has to give a good deal more of that unit's personality to get over the footlights at all.

It was all right. I had done it and had attained some success, so I went back on several other occasions and gave other lectures equally kindly received. . . .

But I simply love hearing other people make good speeches, and I have heard some very fine ones and feel that this has been a real privilege. One can read the story in the Press the next day, but the individuality and humanity of the delivery is missing. Among the best speakers of the day, Mr. Baldwin on Literature is excellent. Perhaps the clearest and best reasoned speaker, with much humour, is Sir John Simon. Lord Hailsham is always interesting. "Jix", one of the few orators of the day on Church matters, speaks without a note, as did Bonar Law. The Duke of Connaught, the quintessence of an English gentleman, is always charming and apt, and his son Prince Arthur is following nobly in his footsteps. Probably the most popular speaker in the land is the Prince of Wales, whose speeches and whose voice are so well known to all wireless listeners.

But nearly all speeches are too long and too low. So many things can be said in five minutes. Just try. When speeches are good they are very, very good. And as a rule the women speak better than the men. Lady Snowden and Miss Royden are always excellent. Every man seems to think he can speak, but no woman tries unless she is pretty sure of herself. I wish I was; but I am not.

Seventy-five per cent of speeches are bad. The speakers have nothing to say and so meander.

Rules I want to make for speakers:

Three minutes for The Chair to introduce the chief speaker.

Fifteen minutes for a lecturer and fifteen minutes for slides to be shown, with his face to the audience while giving his commentary on them, and not the back of his head while he watches his own slides and the audience cannot hear one word.

A mirror above his MS. would show him the picture without turning round, just as a mirror is applied on a motor.

Three minutes for all ordinary speakers, and the Toast-master or Chair or Secretary to ring a bell vigorously at the end of the appointed time.

What a lot can be said in three minutes and what piffle can meander on for an hour. A typical speech delivered to an intellectual audience one day in December, 1931:

"I feel very proud—I am quite surprised—I have been asked at the last moment—I feel it a great—honour—I don't know why I have been asked—I really haven't anything to say—I feel very proud—I am not accustomed to—I feel it is a great honour . . . Um . . . Ah . . . Um . . . Ah . . ."

By this time the audience was beginning to fidget.

"I feel it a very great honour—a very great honour—to have been—ah—um—asked to speak to-night and ah—um—ah—Thank you, ladies and gentlemen—for your very kind attention."

"Sit down," someone called.

He sat down. Hardly amid "thunderous applause", when someone called out: "You've forgotten to propose the toast."

"Oh—er—ah—so I have," and he seized the menu with the list of toasts upon it. Adjusted his pince-nez, discovered that he had got the card upside down, turned it round, couldn't find his place, sighed a few more grunts, and Er, Ah, and Ohs, and said: "I wish to propose—er—the health of—er—ah—oh—Mr. Snooks."

* * * * *

Looking back on a busy and maybe not altogether unsuccessful life one realizes what a lot of mistakes and failures one has made. Of late years since the War, never to have had the courage to make a speech. Modesty, I might like to call it, but modesty such as this one knows is sheer egotism.

Never to have been able to write an actable play.

To have given up good needlework and fine embroidery with that feeble excuse "no time". Of course, there is time. There is always time for everything we seriously want to do.

Oh, and lots more. But you mustn't be bored with my failures, there are too many of them, so I shall keep a few buried in the inner recesses of my heart.

No sooner was Devonshire House finished and the great motor firms and a great Bank duly housed on the ground floor

than THE POWERS (one never really knows who THE POWERS really are) thought it a good opportunity to tear up the roadway of Piccadilly from the Circus to Hyde Park Corner. And, my word, they did.

What a tremendous piece of work that was. Piccadilly had not been relaid for thirty years when suddenly an army of men descended upon it, tore up the wooden roadway, made day and night hideous by working drills and descended gradually to the bowels below.

Have you ever lived above a drill?

If not, don't.

Numbers and numbers of men worked drills all day and all night until we unfortunate people were so tortured and nerve-racked that we would all have been fit for lunatic asylums if it had continued much longer. Complaints were showered, authority at last took notice and the drills ceased their labours at 11 o'clock at night and did not begin again until 6 a.m. the next morning. That was bad enough but those few hours' relaxation retained our sanity.

Just below my flat in 1927 an old London water-main made from a solid tree trunk was exposed; it dated from about 1720 and I have two sections of it to-day on the balcony. This was most interesting to me as I had mentioned these tree-pipes in my book on *Hyde Park* and I took the photographs which are now reproduced; the pipes are relics of a time of which most Londoners who are lovers of their city are keen to know all that can be found. During the five years after I settled in my new home in Devonshire House, London underwent a steady transformation. One old landmark after another was removed or else changed beyond all recognition.

The New Regent Street was finished and enormously high houses arose with very deep basements; Piccadilly Circus tube station was completed, a marvel of underground workmanship where many thousands of passengers now pass and repass on the moving stairs for sixteen hours a day (no less than £60 a day is taken in pennies by the telephone inspectors at Piccadilly station). In this modern wonder of a station there is on view, day and night, an entire exhibition of men's and women's clothing; another feature of the new age—all big shops now have their restaurants, where men as well as women take lunch and tea. Even Park Lane was not exempted from the craze for change; and this former preserve of the aristocracy

and the millionaireocracy was made a dwarfed background for two luxury hotels. Park Lane a home for wandering princes, potentates and Kings of commerce: Park Lane along which for hundreds of years people were dragged to Tyburn to undergo a shameful death. What was Tyburn for nearly six hundred years? Of all the many people who roll by in their cars from the East and West End to Hyde Park and enter by the gates at Marble Arch to join the gay throng, so full of life and animation, of all the hurrying populace who pass in omnibuses or on foot towards Bayswater, or turn the sharp corner where the traffic flows in an unceasing stream up the Edgware Road, how many ever pause at the three cross-roads to give a moment's thought to the fact that this was Tyburn? How many of them are aware that this is the blackest spot in all England?

Now, as I write, a new Underground Railway station is being built opposite Devonshire House to join a direct line from Piccadilly to Hyde Park Corner, thus bringing about the shutting down of Dover Street and Down Street stations. Stratton Street and Berkeley Street are each to have one-way traffic and the flats where Lady Dorothy Nevill lived will be pulled down and the Lansdowne House gardens built over. What changes.

* * * * *

Once upon a time—as late as 1928—a woman was crossing St. James Street from the Post Office towards Pall Mall. It was pouring with rain. The woman held up an umbrella, and, as a taxi almost caught her, she jumped on to that little island facing the dear old clock of St. James's Palace. At the same moment a young man coming from Pall Mall, also covered by a dripping umbrella, was likewise nearly caught by a passing taxi on his side. He jumped on to the island. The two umbrellas became entangled.

"I'm so sorry," said the woman, as a shower of drops descended from every umbrella rib.

"I beg your pardon," laughed the young man as he raised his hat in apology.

The little incident was over. The young man was gone, but not before the female noticed the smile and the golden hair. It was the Prince of Wales.

A moment ago I took my readers back thirty years or more—to my first lecture. Now I shall take them back farther still:

to my social début and to one of my earliest adventures as a traveller. A woman's life is supposed to begin with a presentation at Court, and a very charming beginning it is for anyone lucky enough to make her début under such delightful circumstances.

Among a number of faded papers comes the following account of a presentation to Queen Victoria. In those days the functions were called Drawing Rooms and were in the afternoon.

Yes. I WAS TO BE PRESENTED. What a world was to open at my feet. No more schoolroom thralldom, no longer Fräulein's austere eye was to watch my every movement, no longer were horrible sums to worry my brain, or handkerchiefs to be hemmed with a hundred stitches to the inch. Nothing but dancing and fun in the future. Presented. Oh, how well the word sounded as it rang in my ears from morning to night, how beautifully I made my oft-rehearsed curtsy to Queen Victoria in my dreams, and went through the ceremony again and again in those delightful, half-conscious moments between sleeping and waking.

A Drawing Room had been announced for May 8, and it had been decided that we should come up to town directly after Easter and I should "come out" at this Royal function. No sooner had we arrived at the gay metropolis than I took Mother off to the dressmakers, for, of course, my dress was of the greatest possible importance. I saw dozens of stuffs I liked; brocades with enormous patterns, rich satins, so thick that they stood quite alone; but I was allowed none of these.

"They are too old," the dressmaker said, and it was finally decided that a plain white corded silk was more in keeping with my years, which now numbered eighteen. The dress was to be trimmed with puffs of white tulle, nestling amongst the folds of which were little bunches of snowdrops. Again and again we went to Mme. V. to try on that delightful gown, and I strutted about with my train and felt *really* grown up with the yards of white silk flowing behind me. It was a glorious dress, and I felt awfully proud of its possession.

As soon as the date of the Drawing Room was announced an application was sent in to the Lord Chamberlain's Office at St. James's Palace for a card for my presentation. It arrived the next day—a bright blue card.

* * * * *

It was a lovely day, and everyone seemed to have gone to St. James's Park, divided from the Green Park by the Mall,

to look at the Drawing Room ladies—and no wonder. I would much rather have been walking up and down outside, looking at the lovely women and the diamonds and the flowers, than sitting in the brougham almost baking in the heat, while it was again explained to me what I was to do, and not to be so excited, but to try and sit quiet. "Remember, dear," Mother said, "if the Queen is there you must take off your right-hand glove, and when Her Majesty puts out her hand you must slip yours underneath it, and, bending as low as you possibly can, kiss her hand."

"Oh, yes, I know," I replied, "and I have practised the curtsy again and again, and I don't think I shall tumble over."

"Tumble over," exclaimed Mother, in horror, "indeed, I hope not. Then you must pass on a bit, and make a low curtsy to the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of Coburg, and any other Royal ladies present, and when the official gives you your train, pick it up over your left arm, and get out of the Royal presence as quickly as you can without turning your back upon the Royalties."

Had I not repeated these instructions to myself again and again, and did I not feel perfectly competent to kiss the hands of all the Royalties in Europe after so many rehearsals?

We went in the C-spring carriage with the pair of horses with flowers on their blinkers and two men on the box, and I was all agog to see this wonderful and great little old lady.

The crowd was delightful; they made the most amusing remarks. One awful man looked in the carriage next to ours, where an old lady was sitting alone, and remarked: "There ain't much to look at in that there carriage beyond flowers and diamonds, I lay."

At last, at last the carriage bowled on to the accompaniment of a military band, passing under the archway of Buckingham Palace, into the courtyard, which is hidden from the public. Out we got, marched up a few stairs, and entered the cloak-room, where pleasant women took charge of our shawls, pulled out our dresses, and politely smiled upon us. Leaving the cloak-room, which looked into the lovely garden, we continued our way upstairs, at the top of which stood a gentleman in black velvet, with steel buckles and a long stick, who examined every lady as she passed to see that she had the regulation three plumes, white veil, and white gloves; for it was this official's duty to see that Her Majesty's regulations for Court dress were strictly

carried out. There were lots of gorgeous servants everywhere in red ; officials from the Lord Chamberlain's office in uniform ; but none of them was so beautiful as the old Beefeaters, a Corps who come from their H.Q. at Friary Court, St. James' Palace, in all their splendour to officiate at Buckingham Palace on Drawing Room days.

At the top of the staircase was the concert hall. It was beautiful. Hundreds of ladies were there before us ; nearly all the seats, in fact, were full. We met several friends, with whom we had little chats, but I really felt I couldn't speak, I was so awfully excited, and so bewildered by all the handsome women, the lovely diamonds, the beautiful lace, and the scent of the flowers in the bouquets that I didn't want to talk to anybody, although I think a *shriek* would have done me good. We had to stand, and we were there so long it was dreadful, the ladies pushing up against us, their bouquets catching in our tulle veils, or the diamond stars hooking into Mother's lace, that it seemed a never-ending time to stand, and I got more and more impatient. Actually they kept us in that room till ten minutes to four, and then the barrier was opened, and we passed like sheep from a fold into a wide passage, at the end of which we were stopped by another barrier ; then into a picture gallery, and finally into a beautiful drawing-room, which was our last halting-place before reaching the Presence Chamber to see that wonderful little old lady who ruled a quarter of the world so grandly. I had taken off my glove, and was safely holding my card containing my name in my left hand along with my bouquet, according to instructions, when a Court official, speaking to a Duchess on our right, said : "THE QUEEN HAS JUST LEFT."

Was this not awful ? All those hours of waiting to see Queen Victoria and after all she had only received the *entrée* people and some half-dozen outsiders like ourselves. This quite upset me, and I had to bustle on my glove again as fast as I could, and remember what I was to do to the Princess of Wales.

"Merely curtsy as low as you can, and otherwise leave the Presence Chamber backwards." A gorgeous gentleman in a beautiful uniform came and opened the barrier. Mother passed through, with me close at her heels, and we formed into a queue which was slowly passing round two sides of a room. At the further door the ladies' trains were being let down by Lord Carrington, or someone, who arranged them as rapidly as he possibly could, and he had no end of a time with one lady's

four yards of train, for it had got all twisted up, and I do not think he was quite sure whether the yellow brocade or the heliotrope satin lining ought to go at the top. However, at last it was untwisted, and off she sailed across a small empty room, at the back end of which a lot of people who had already passed were calmly looking on. I was in such a frightful flutter, with my heart in my mouth, that I do not really know whether my train was undone at all. Every idea seemed to have gone out of my head as I saw Mother sail into the Royal presence and make two or three beautiful curtseys and pass on. She had vanished in a second, and my nervousness was terribly increased when an official asked me for my card, and roared out my name very loud. I curtsied somehow, though I am afraid the beautifully rehearsed bends ended in a kind of charity bob. I never saw anyone or anything, and only remember hurrying on as quickly as I could, having my train thrown into my left arm, tumbling out backwards as well as I was able, and finding Mother at the end near the door asking me how I had enjoyed myself. It had all been horribly quick. "Enjoyed myself," I exclaimed; "why, I never saw anyone or anything, except a row of beautiful ladies, smiling faces, gorgeous diamonds, something black and something heliotrope; but who was who, and what was what, I have not the slightest idea."

And that was my presentation. Why it was all so quick, I hadn't had time to understand anything. I don't believe I was in that Presence Chamber ten seconds by the clock. Only a small room was used in those days, not the great ballroom as to-day. I felt happy now, though; it was all over and done with. I had not tumbled down or done anything awful; so we quietly went and stood in the room where we could watch the trains being arranged and the ladies passing in to make their bows. I wonder if they were all as excited and nervous as I was. But then I was a Victorian miss and not a post-war bachelor-girl. . . .

* * * * *

The travel experience was in Mexico, some years later. I went there to write a book. It was the first of the three books I was to write on that wonderful land of beauty and surprise. . . .

* * * * *

Funnily enough I almost participated in one of the greatest romances in financial history, and yet I never made one penny out of it, having no spare cash to invest in anything. "Mex Oil" in huge red caldrons is known everywhere in the streets

to-day, and a whole fleet of sixteen thousand ton steamers carry it, and nothing else, for they are just oil tankers, and go all over the world. I was in at the birth. In 1901, J. B. Body, Sir Weetman Pearson's partner in Mexico, was tapping rock with a geologist's hammer in the southern portion of Mexico on the Atlantic side, at a spot known as Minatitlan. He was testing this rock for building the breakwaters which were to join the Atlantic to the Pacific by train from that new harbour to Salina Cruz on the other side. As he split the rock he saw nodules of imprisoned crude oil. This amazed him, and turning to some of the native peons standing beside him he showed them the nodules. They told him that if he was interested in that sort of thing they could take him into the forest about a mile away where there was a pool that smelt just like that.

"Let us go at once," he exclaimed, all excitement.

"That is impossible. It is virgin forest, there is no road. The *señor* must wait."

Impatiently he waited, slept under matting stretched across poles native fashion, heard the pigs and chickens fighting underneath him all night, and at the first possible moment followed the leader to the pool. Sure enough it was crude oil. That was the first oil known in Mexico. Naturally the situation required careful handling, which ended in a fifty year contract between the Mexican Government and S. Pearson & Son in the gigantic project of working the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Railway, and building harbours on the Mexican Gulf at Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz in the Pacific. . . . I crossed in the first train later with twenty-two engineers and officials. Neither Panama (opened shortly after the Great War) nor Nicaragua canals were then made.* But to make a long story short, when I was in Mexico again in 1904 the petrol was beginning its career. My chief recollection is one of great excitement in that tropical land, and a very nasty smell. The first refinery was not in working order till 1906, but in 1929 the Gulf of Mexico constituted the centre of gravity of the world's oil trade, and its price regulated the world's prices, and it was J. B. Body, an Englishman, who found the first Mexican oil in 1901.

It was fearfully hot as after luncheon we rode down from the little hostelry in the village of Cacahuimilpa—pronounced Ca-ca-hui-mil-pa—to the grottoes of the same name.

* See 'Mexico as I Saw It'.

At midday the heat in Southern Mexico is almost overpowering, and but for our enormous sombreros we could not have endured it. The horses rarely stumbled over the volcanic rocks, often as steep as a staircase, and far more uneven, but horses get accustomed to anything, and the Mexican breed are no exception to this rule; nevertheless, on the return journey, one of the poor beasts unfortunately slipped and tumbled over a nasty ledge, his rider cutting his head badly. He was not able to leave Cacahuimilpa with us the next morning, but followed some hours later with the guard our good Governor left behind to look after him. We had so many Rurales with us, we could easily spare three for the purpose. They were all most polite men, ever eager to perform some kindly act, shade a saddle, tighten girths, flick away mosquitoes, and, in fact, do anything they could think of to add to my comfort. Instinctive courtesy, perhaps, to such a strange being as a horsewoman.

The Rurales often use flint and steel for kindling fires. They are most handy men, reminding me of sailors by their willingness and ability to do almost anything and everything; unlike the majority of sailors, however, they are crack shots as well as skilled horsemen, to which qualities the peace of Mexico is largely due to-day.

When we dismounted at a large cave-like opening in a well of rock, the national air of Mexico sounded suddenly from the dark depths below. The village band had been sent on before, to greet us. The effect was most strange in its echoing tones, and the national anthem was followed by the President Diaz march. The aperture was large, but behind the great opening loomed inky blackness. Gathered round the mouth of the cave were numberless Indians, and a sprinkling of richer folk. Candles were distributed to the company, which by this time must have swelled in numbers to something like a couple of hundred, as many people round about had availed themselves of the opportunity of joining our party, permission to do so having been graciously given them by the Governor.

"You had better leave your hat," someone remarked. "It may be warm inside the caves, and besides, in the low passages there will be no room for it." Accordingly, the sombrero was left behind, for which I felt heartily thankful later. My friend also advised me to put on shoes instead of riding boots, explaining the climb would be difficult in parts, and my boots would probably get cut. He was right.

Colonel Alarcón, according to custom, offered me his arm, and escorted me down into one of the greatest wonders of the world. The descent was easy, for a roadway had been made ; but it was really very impressive to see, in twos and twos, about a couple of hundred people marching solemnly into impenetrable blackness, to the strains of martial music. Each person carried a long lighted candle, but before we returned to our starting point, six and a half hours later, those candles had nearly burnt out.

"The caves are wonderful," everyone had told me ; but no one had attempted to explain how wonderful, simply because no words could fitly describe them. Those who have seen the well-known Mammoth Caves of Kentucky, unanimously agree even they are not so grand or marvellous as these almost unknown wonders buried in Southern Mexico.

For four hours we walked on, tumbling, stumbling, clattering, or crawling—no one should try to penetrate, or attempt to go beyond the first two easy caverns, who is not physically strong. We had been up at four that morning, had driven for a couple of hours, and ridden for three, and I must own that before we left those monstrous caves I was quite done up, and feel it only right to advise no woman to attempt the same feat unless she can sleep at the village, or in the caves themselves, the night before and the night after ; those grottoes are quite enough for anyone to explore in a single day, without any other exercise whatever.

Now to attempt to give some little idea of the caves. They were originally formed by a river, the water-line of which is distinctly visible, while in places the ground is marked with wave-ripples like the sand of a beach. Then, again, many stones are round and polished, the result of constant rolling by water ; and still more wonderful, two rivers flow beneath them, probably through caves just as marvellous, which no man has yet dared penetrate. These two rivers which come out beneath the caves are called San Jeronimo and San Corralejo. The first has been measured and found to contain a minimum flow of water of 5.5 cubic metres per second. The other has not yet been measured, but is supposed to contain about four cubic metres per second. They join and enter the mountain one hundred metres below the grottoes, under which they pass, reappearing after a fall of five hundred feet at a distance of three kilometres. No boat has ever entered the enormous caverns through which these rivers flow, because, with waters

rushing at such velocity, and a fall of five hundred feet, it would be madness to attempt to do so. Plans have been suggested of letting a boat in with trusty ropes and grappling irons to pull her back ; but there might be within a sudden fall of water, and boat and occupants be whirled over the edge before the people outside had time to drag them back. Mysterious and marvellous are the rivers below the caves.

Above these torrents of water are the caves themselves, which form undoubtedly one of the greatest natural phenomena of the world ; and they, too, were made by water. That very same water which in millions of years washed them out and is now busily engaged in washing out others below.

Very little is yet known of these wonderful caves of Caca-huimilpa, and some geologist has a great work waiting for him. In all my wanderings I have never seen anything like them. Niagara is great ; the rapids of Uleaborg in Finland are wonderful. The Matterhorn or Mont Blanc are splendid. These caves, however, are so endless, so extraordinary, so colossal, that it seems as if they cannot possibly be real.

One sits down amazed to see a cavern lighted at different points by half-a-dozen magnesium wires, and at least two hundred candles, yet which is barely illumined at all. One keeps on repeating, "Am I awake ? Is this real or is it a dream ? What power made these things ? What is man or man's work, what is the greatest cathedral in the world compared with this ?"

I believe we went through about seven caverns, and our party of two hundred Indians, all carrying lights, barely made a flicker in that intense gloom—lights were nothing in the vast space. Rockets were sent up—rockets which were known to ascend two hundred and fifty feet, but which nowhere reached the top ; the height is more probably somewhere about five or six hundred feet, or twice that of St. Paul's Cathedral ; who could tell in that obscurity ? Think of a stone roof, without any supports, over a stone chamber, inside which one St. Paul's on the top of another might be placed.

The size alone appalled, but the stalactites and stalagmites almost petrified one with amazement. Many of them have joined, making rude pillars several hundred feet high, and perhaps a hundred feet in diameter at the base. Others have formed grotesque shapes. A seal upon the ground is positively life-like ; a couple of monster Indian idols ; faces and forms innumerable ; here an old woman bent nearly double, there

a man with a basket on his head, thrones fit for kings, organs with every pipe visible, which, when tapped, ring forth deep tones. It was all so great, so wonderful, so marvellous ; I felt all the time as if I were in some strange cathedral—greater, grander and more impressive than any I had ever entered. Its aspect of power and strength paralysed me, not with fear but with intense admiration and awe.

I am no geologist, but one or two things struck me. Many of the stalactites and stalagmites are white, of purest crystal ; they might be of soda hanging in fringes ; others again are of black, muddy compound, while yet another kind look like marble. Even to this day the drip, drip, continues, small ones are constantly forming ; and in wet weather the floor of the caverns becomes swampy.

People have penetrated four or five kilometres—about three miles—into the caves, but have found no way out save the entrance ; and at one spot not far within, is a cairn of stones erected in memory of a man whose skeleton, with that of his dog, was found some few years ago.

The Empress Carlotta made a famous visit there, and on one of the stalagmites the fact is recorded, but it is beyond that point climbing becomes most troublesome and dangerous, and the effects more wonderful.

Every one of our party felt as if he were in a Turkish bath, beads of perspiration stood on every brow, and yet it was not safe to sit for more than a moment, the stones strike so cold. There are a couple of streams of clear water, and the biscuits, brandy and whisky wisely taken by the thoughtful Governor, proved a godsend.

At times it was terribly stiff climbing, and several of the party had nasty falls, our candles giving very inefficient light ; at others it was a case of sitting down and sliding in order to get from one boulder to another ; but it was worth it all, to see such a sight, to feel the Power that made those caves, to bow before the Almighty Hand which had accomplished such work even in millions of years. There hung those great stone roofs without support of any kind—what architect could have performed such a miracle ? There stood those majestic pillars embedded in rocks above and below ; there hung yards and yards of stalactites weighing tons, and yet no stay or girder kept them in place. It was a lesson, a chapter in religion, something solemn and soul-stirring, something never to be forgotten ;

one of the Creator's great mysteries, where every few yards presented some fresh revelation.

My knees were trembling, every rag of clothing I wore was as wet as when first taken from the washerwoman's tub, yet still I struggled on, fascinated, bewildered, awed, by the sights which met me at every step. Think of it. Stumbling along for four and a half hours, even then not reaching the end, and though we returned by the easiest and quickest way it was two hours more before we found the exit.

In one of the caves the Governor proposed my health, and the party gave three cheers, which resounded again and again in that wonderful subterranean chamber, deep down in the bowels of the earth, with a mountain above and a couple of rivers below. The military band of Cacahuimilpa accompanied us, and the effect produced by their music was stupendous. No other words can express the volume of sound; because the largest band in the world could not succeed in producing the same effect of resonance in the open air which ten performers caused in those underground chambers.

I have given no idea of the immense grandeur of Cacahuimilpa, because it is impossible for me to do so. I have stood beneath the domes of St. Paul's in London, of St. Peter's in Rome, of St. Ysaak in St. Petersburg, of the Capitol in Washington, but all those buildings are small and insignificant in height and size when compared with some of those caverns.

We talk of "Before Christ" as very long ago; we think of Aztec remains a few thousand years since as an eternity distant, but what millions of years it must have taken for drops of water, yes, *drops* of water, to accomplish such things as these.

In such scenes one might fancy the death-cry of departing spirits, expect to find chattering witches presiding over those weird natural altars, or hideous gnomes squatting on yonder projecting rock. Those caves contain the majesty of the Brocken, the weirdness of Peer Gynt.

A silence that can be felt, a silence so profound it may almost be heard; nothing ruffles the air, no vibrations are apparent. All is stiller, indeed, than the grave itself.

Who made all this? What power rent those rocks? What hand holds that monstrous dome of stone on high?

Man is silent; but in this all-pervading silence, surely the voice of God speaks.

Hot, tired, and overpowered, we were plodding homewards

in utter silence, when a letter was handed to a member of the party, by a mounted soldier, who, seeing our now dimly flickering lights approaching the entrance, had dared venture into the grottoes to deliver his missive. We were all surprised at the man's arrival, and more surprised to find he carried an envelope. It turned out to be a telegram, which had followed our party from a village a long distance off, and had been sent on by a special horseman with instructions to overtake us at all speed. Was ever telegram received amid stranger surroundings, by a cosmopolitan collection of humanity assembled in the bowels of the earth far, far away from civilization ?

What news that telegram contained. It had travelled seven thousand miles across land and sea ; it had arrived at a moment when we all were overawed by the stupendous grandeur of our surroundings, and thoroughly worn out with fatigue. At the first glance it seemed impossible to read. Men accustomed to the vagaries of foreign telegraph clerks when dealing with the English language, found, however, no difficulty in deciphering its meaning :

“QUEEN VICTORIA IS DEAD.”

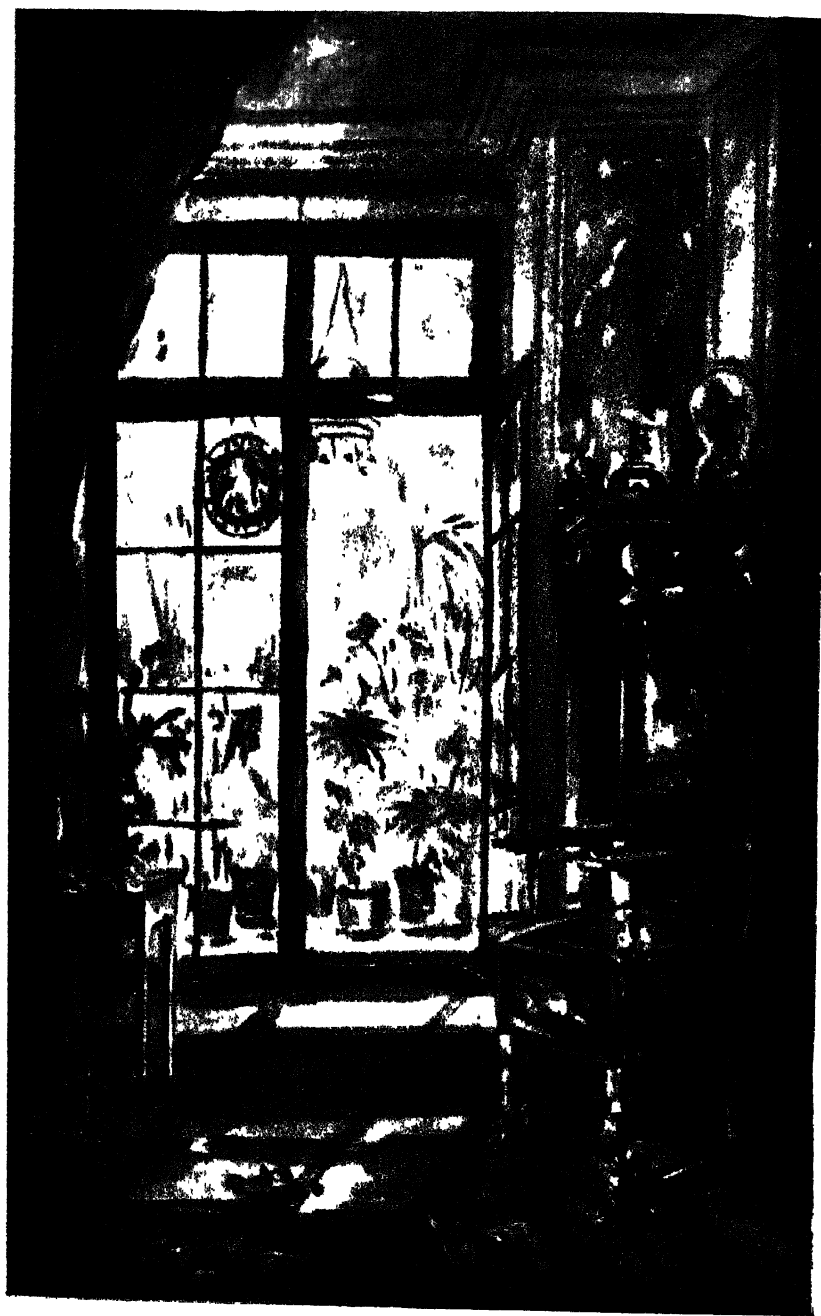
An historic telegram, sent me by the great President of Mexico himself, announcing a national calamity, and received amid the wildest possible surroundings, in the strangest possible way.

The Queen was dead. The English-speaking people had lost her who had been their figure-head for nearly sixty-three years. The monarch to whom the whole world paid homage as a woman, and respect as a Queen, had died at Osborne on the previous day, while we, wandering over those Aztec ruins of Xochicalco, had not even heard of her illness.

Impressed as we were by the mystic grandeur of the caves, amazed at the wonders of Nature, this solemn news seemed to fit the serious thoughts of the day, thoughts which had grown in intensity with each succeeding hour. Cacahuimilpa appeared a fitting spot in which to hear of a great public misfortune. Time and place for once were in no wise “out of tune”.

The Queen was dead. And within twenty-four hours the news was known in the depths of the earth in one of Nature's grandest cathedrals, thousands of miles distant from where Victoria the Good drew her last breath.

It was dark, and the way steep as we rode back to the village in profound silence.



My Greenhouse, nearly a hundred feet above Piccadilly. Christmas Day, 1930.

CHAPTER III

ENGLAND, HOME AND BEAUTY

Could I face it?—Starting a new life—Life amid chaos—Atmosphere of rooms—Sackloads of letters destroyed—Dearest belongings go to Museums—In full possession—T. P. O'Connor's horror of lifts—Travel memoirs—Snoring—England in Spring, 1926—Sir Henry Dickens reads his father's "Christmas Carol"—What I did with a bundle of Charles Dickens's letters—British women the most beautiful—Finest parks in the world—Lord Somebody and the owl—Carlton Club—Our country's greatness—Victorian clothes—British prestige—Empire courage—Our coloured brothers—Morrison of Peking—Flower painting—Wonderful nights—The King's illness—Broadcasting and my experiences—"Australia speaking," 1929—Mr. Stanley Bruce broadcasts electors, 1931—A Girl who wanted to go on the stage—How I nearly did it—A wonderful offer—An overcrowded profession—Fame and publicity—Girlhood revived.

COULD I face it without my sons? All ambition dead. Had I any pluck left to return to London, to settle down again? Was it to work or play, or to start a new life?

These were the questions that had constantly recurred to my mind.

It was a fight.

To start a new life when one is no longer young is a labour of Hercules, and to smile when everything in the world has gone before is—well, is it worth the strain?

I was getting restive. The leg was only partly cured after a second course of treatment at Vichy, following Bath, and I was just wandering about in hotels all of April, May, June, July and August. Life seemed to hold no future. My one and only solace was the paint-box. I read of the General Strike in London far away in the Pyrenees. I seemed to belong to nobody, and my life to be centring round nothing. I shook myself and argued with myself, and told myself I was a fool. I said that if my two boys had fallen for their country I should be proud of them, and if I was left behind I must be left behind for some useful purpose, not just to sit and grouse and bother other people. I told myself I must wake up and get busy and start a new life and try and be as pleasant and useful as possible

instead of becoming a disgruntled, sour-faced woman with a melancholy atmosphere round her.

* * * * *

Then the day came when the builders said the flat was practically ready. I shook myself again, caught the next train, got a bedroom at a Queen's Gate Hotel and began operations.

There waiting was the place in the sun for a scarred life, high up in the sky—almost indeed amongst the stars.

The stars beckoned. The moon smiled. The sun warmed and a new day dawned. I returned to London.

* * * * *

I came back on the 1st September, 1926, after staying abroad for four months.

Like a fool, I moved the furniture in on the 10th of September and moved myself in on the 1st of October. So for thirty days I was the one and only tenant sleeping in Devonshire House. If you want to go into a half-furnished home DON'T, or you will wish you were OUT. Then another woman came to the opposite corner. She found the noise and dirt of workmen too much, and after a couple of nights departed to the country. Wise woman. With the caretaker and his wife, for another thirty days, in fact, I was in sole possession for six long weeks.

It certainly was the most dirty, distracting time I have ever spent. Three furniture vans and taxi-loads of superfluity had to be sent away, three thousand books being only an item. Every drawer or cupboard brought forth reminders of the dead. The whole of my life seemed to be unfolding before me. It became unbearable alone in that vast building with seven flights of stairs to walk up or down every time I went out. And I had to go out to be fed. Nobody was to blame for the discomfort but myself. My restlessness had brought me to anchor in a sea of old junk.

Chaos does not describe the situation. A lift had been put into temporary use, to carry up all my possessions. Nothing fitted anywhere. There was enough for twelve rooms instead of for four. There were no blinds, and September produced a heat-wave. Chaos and chaos worse confounded.

The flat became my real landed property on September 29th, 1926 (Quarter Day), and I actually slept among the debris on October 1st.

The electric light was not ready, there were no locks on the doors, only temporary fittings were on the four French windows, the floors required to be finally polished. There were no bells—just as well, as there was no one to answer them. And from 6 a.m. to what seemed to be midnight men hammered and hammered and hammered. Would peace ever reign in my life again? But I had just had to get in somewhere, somehow.

Now, of course, I am sorry I destroyed practically all my notes and manuscripts and papers and world-wide photographs and maps, which I did because I thought it was impossible to start a new life, impossible ever to build up a new home alone, a home that would be more like a cage for one solitary woman, without father, mother, husband or children. But something had to be done. One could not wander for ever, and sit aimlessly in an hotel, among all the other lonely women who find consolation in Bridge or ailments.

There was no room for the MSS. or the photographs or the maps or the old letters. Sackloads were destroyed. The whole record of a busy woman burnt in the furnace, as her life had been singed and burnt in many ways. Eight museums accepted some of the "oddments", from the British Museum to the South Kensington, from Bethnal Green to the Royal College of Music, from the Wellcome Museum to the Royal Chemical Society and the Royal College of Physicians War Museum.

Cup prizes went back to clubs, books went back to Harrow and Charterhouse, a £150 sideboard was sold for £7 10s. od. (it was too long for flat life), a grand piano for £34, and lots of things fetched nothing at all. Others I gave to people who were glad of them, and almost depleted the linen cupboard now there were no longer several beds and their requirements.

Disembarrassed of half of one's past, one ground one's teeth and began again. How much more we can control and rebuild our lives than we wot of, if we really try.

The caretaker and his wife slept in my flat, and the few times I ventured forth at night as weeks went on, the caretaker and I went down in the dark workman's lift with the tiny torch I had used in the Siberian railway accident sixteen months before—the parting gift of my son Harley, who so objected to my going to Russia and gave me the torch saying: "You may find this useful." We grovelled along a dark hall with a lantern, he unlocked wooden trellis doors and padlocks and chains as if

I were a prisoner, and off I would go for the evening, to be met by the man again at some specified hour. This caused much amusement once to a Field-Marshal, who brought me home from a Navy League dinner and couldn't believe I was sleeping with seven hundred empty rooms and complete darkness everywhere except in my own flat.

Many people have a horror of lifts. The wife of one of our great Ministers once insisted on walking up seven flights of stairs to my flat, and then she walked down again. I had to do this daily when I first came to Devonshire House as its only inhabitant, so I know the height and horror of those stairs. We have eight lifts now and eight staircases, so we are well provided for in accordance with L.C.C. rules. There are other people who cannot stand on a roof-garden looking down on Piccadilly. Hence my hoardings, and a hundred and twenty-five feet of window-boxes with a three-foot privet hedge to make them feel secure. The late T. P. O'Connor, for so many years the Father of the House of Commons, refused to come up in the lift or to stand on my roof garden, which is nearly a hundred feet above Piccadilly. He was as afraid of height as he was of death.

Which reminds me that once in Mexico a great engineer refused to cross, with me, a high bridge he had made because he could not face height. So he shut his eyes and was led across while I tripped behind and saw the water between the planks.

Lifts and heights strike horror to some, and yet others go on to the top of St. Paul's or St. Peter's and cheerily clean the weather-cock. It is just a matter of constitution apparently.

So in love am I with my flat that I have refused all invitations to spend a night out of it. I stand by the concluding sentence of my "Adventurous Journey" book—*J'y suis, J'y reste*. And I look back and smile.

All they who never travel, what a lot they miss—but what they gain, as regards creature comforts.

For when it comes to the actual process of travelling, there is much which has not yet been cured, and therefore has to be endured. It is a wonder I am not blind. We can go round and round and up and down the world and hardly ever find a satisfactory light in bedroom or cabin. The electric light bulb is generally in a ridiculous place. You are expected neither to read, nor to do your hair, nor to shave your chin. And you are generally expected to wander about strange rooms in the dark, tumble over chairs and dislocate your ankles over shoes lying on

the floor on your way to and from the extinguisher somewhere near the door and at the farthest angle from the bed.

There is no snore that I don't know ; one particular snore was so tremendous that the guilty man was removed from a passage-way of a C.P.R. boat crossing the Pacific by request of all the thirty other occupants of that particular alley. He was like a hippo' in the Sudan, or an elephant in the Punjab, his sounds were so loud and strange.

To counteract the joys of their almost invariably good beds in France, our allies have a little habit of standing a loud ticking clock in bedrooms. Dressing-tables are more or less unknown and a mirror is often a thing over a marble chimney-piece with its clock. The mirror is difficult to see oneself in and the clock is persistently aggressive to hear. All trumpery little things, but life is made up of trumpery little things. And then the amazing stupidity of Steamship Companies. They build vast ships with enormous sitting-rooms in which nobody sits, and the smallest cabin-rooms in which everyone has to sleep. When will they learn ? Really they never will learn till they have women on every Board, and a female ship's architect. More of one's life is spent in one's cabin than anywhere else ; hats are not any better for being sat on ; shoes require space inside the wardrobe and not to glide with every wave about the floor ; open basins eat up hairpins and brooches and a little covering day-time table would avoid such loss ; a radiator next one's head is prone to produce a headache ; one does not care to unpack a trunk every time one wants a handkerchief and would be glad of shelves and wall-bags.

Mosquitoes, tropical rains, an insufficient number of bath-rooms even in the "best" hotels, arctic cold and draughts without radiators, all help to create exhaustion. And tips. Up till recently there was an additional ten per cent on the bill for service, which got over one's difficulties for a few years. The porters of these Continental hotels are now creating a demand for extra tips and the old system is creeping back, without displacing the new ten per cent which was invented to check the obsequious rapacity that troubled hotel sojourners, rich and poor alike. So one now pays twice over. Servants are attracted thereby. But the private domestic servant gets the husbands more than hotel, teashop girls or factory workers.

Yes. Those cooks who stayed seven, eight and ten years smoothed many thorns from one's thorny path. That house-

maid who was with me, and later with my Mother, for years and years monopolized the linen cupboard and took the greatest pride in its contents.

A party was a joy to the parlourmaids, in fact they were always happy when the word "party"—if even only a tea-party—sounded its advent, and were never tired or bored.

Well. Well. Let us hope for better days.

Thank God for one thing. I was born in the good old Victorian days and right in the middle of her Empire, in the greatest city of the world—London. . . .

Speaking of Victorian Days I must jump on momentarily for three years to January, 1929, and a charming invitation from Lady Dickens to hear her husband give a reading of the "Christmas Carol". Sir Henry Dickens is, of course, the Common Serjeant of London. Naturally I accepted with glee and what an interesting evening it was. That dear old man, approaching his eightieth year, never faltered for one moment. He solemnly declaimed the "Christmas Carol" for nearly two hours without once looking at a note. That alone was an amazing feat of memory. It was all very fine for him to laugh and say: "From the time I was born I heard my father read and recite his own work until it became part and parcel of my system."

That may be true, but memory is not as keen at eighty as it is at twenty, and it was undoubtedly a magnificent feat. He had gone through it from first to last two nights before the party and that is all he had done to refresh his mind.

Half-way, he paused, made us a sweet bow, disappeared and had some refreshment. No one was indiscreet enough to ask what! And back again he came as full of vigour as ever to complete his task. That Dickens' night in the billiard-room of their charming house in Mulberry Walk was never to be forgotten. He joined us at the buffet supper and hardly seemed tired. A wonderful performance, and a wonderful son of a great father. Another delightful memory of Henry Dickens and his wife was my dropping in one winter's afternoon, and finding her at the tea-table in front of the fire, keeping muffins hot because she expected "Harry" any moment. Henry came. The dear old lady jumped up, carefully helped him out of his coat and muffler and herself hung them up, returning to take the muffins from the fender, when she sat him down on that very cold afternoon to a very warm tea.

"Of course, I did not come in a car, I haven't got a car,

and I can't afford a car. I came by bus as I always do and walked from the corner," he said as he enjoyed his hot muffins, and then we discussed the Dickens' Annual Dinner. It has been my lucky fate to sit at the top table on a couple of occasions at the Dickens' Dinner, and very pleasant evenings we have had, but if they had known the dreadful crime I once committed, I don't think I should have been asked to take such a position.

When I was a little girl I was given an autograph book—then the fashion. One day my mother handed me a small bundle of letters saying: "These letters to your grandfather (James Muspratt) from Charles Dickens will be lovely for your book. Dickens used to stay at Seaforth Hall, and did a great deal of writing there." So kissing me good-bye my mother left me.

There seemed an awful lot of letters on very large sheets of paper and written on both sides. They were larger than my book. They worried me, so . . . Now comes the awful confession. This little girl cut off the large ending and large signature to make the paper fit the book.

When my mother returned, she asked me if I had arranged the letters nicely.

"I didn't, they were too big."

"What did you do with them?"

"I cut off one, and put it in the book."

"And the others?"

"I put on the nursery fire."

Never have I dared acknowledge my innocent crime before, and now the Dickens' Fellowship will probably strike me off the roll.

But I am wandering from my spot in the sun.

England in the autumn of 1926.

What a welcome, after travelling more than a hundred thousand miles in the seven years since the Armistice. I was more proud of being a Britisher than ever, more entranced with the beauties of the British homeland, of its roads—the best in the world—of its gardens and parks and open spaces which none can beat—of its cathedrals which are only surpassed here and there abroad—of its amazing collection of art treasures at the National Gallery, the South Kensington Museum, the Wallace Collection and the British Museum, with its inimitable collection of books. Proud, yes, proud beyond words, of the London policeman and his amazing handling of traffic. Paris and New York are far behind London in this respect.

England, why, yes—the most beautiful women in the world are of British make. Look at their complexions and their faces. Alas, we can no longer say their figures—for they are becoming humpbacked, high-shouldered and of hideous gait. (For beautiful female forms one must turn to the East. What poise, what grace, what dignity.)

The smartest men in the world people the pavement of Clubland and Mayfair.

Yes, there is only one London of eleven million souls and where even modern Broadcasting is better than anywhere else. Where everyone finds his Mecca in time.

But above all England in Spring—England one vast garden of green swards and rose-grown cottages. It is the home of countless millions who have never seen it, but who belong to the greatest power in God's earth to-day, the British Empire.

* * * * *

Twice a week a military band plays below me in the Green Park and their music is wafted across to my dear little flat. Every Sunday morning the bugles sound and the band plays for the Guards stationed at Wellington Barracks to march to their own particular church in their grounds. Every morning at ten and every evening at six o'clock during the summer months the dear old coach lumbers along Piccadilly to the famous restaurant and cellars of Hatchetts. In 1661 the journey between London and Oxford occupied two whole days by coach. Then "The Flying Dutchman" was put upon the roads and accomplished the journey in thirteen hours. Nowadays coaching is speeded up and people clamour for places for these lovely rural drives. My coach is a really proper one. Four fine horses, gentlemen drivers who handle the team for the love of holding the ribbons. Behind sits the manipulator of the long coaching horn. What a delightful sound it is, as inspiring as the call to hounds, and yet one can hear that twice a day in Piccadilly.

Quicker and cheaper than the stage coaches are the motor coaches. There are seventy thousand of them in Great Britain, each licensed to carry from fourteen to fifty passengers, and a very excellent idea they are. London to Edinburgh in one day for one pound.

In all my travels I cannot recall any city in the world that is so richly endowed with public parks and gardens as London. The Royal Parks (St. James's, Hyde Park, Green Park and

Regent's Park) all date from the time when good King Hal acquired large spaces in which to gratify his love of the chase. Mercifully they have been preserved for the Nation and are freely open to the public.

Amid all the roar of Piccadilly and in close proximity to its ceaseless motor traffic, on the other side of the rails in Green Park, flocks of sheep browse unconcernedly on its grassy swards and tree-shaded knolls. On summer days I look down from my roof-garden and see the groups of town-dwellers with their families, the young clerk or the mechanic with his lass, the lone men, and the equally lone women-workers, all strolling about or listening to the music of a military band—freely provided for them by the London County Council Amusements Committee.

Free for all, aristocracy and democracy alike. What more Socialistic picture could you want? The old meadowland of Hay Hill Farm would not, methinks, have held out the same welcome to the burgesses and craftsmen of Ye Citie as it does to-day. These Crown lands are indeed a boon and blessing to the people, and certainly the Green Park is all that to me with its bird life.

Lord Somebody lived at the Carlton Club. One week-end he went away. On the Monday morning the valet went to his room to tidy up, and, lo and behold, there were smuts everywhere; a horrible mess lay before the empty grate—soot—and lots of it. He stood amazed—waited, pondered and waited. Then a little squeak—just a little squeak—he turned round. What could it be? There sitting on the narrow mirror an owl, a real live, large owl that had tumbled down the chimney, from St. James's Park, and was sitting on the mirror in all solemnity.

He was made an honorary member of the Carlton Club.

Sometimes when I look at a map of the world and see the huge size of Russia, China, or the Americas, and then note the almost microscopic proportions of the British Isles (formerly known as the United Kingdom, till Ireland left the nest), the thought arises "Can it really be?" Can it be true that this little red-coloured spot is the Motherland, the hub, the incubating chamber—call it what you will, from which sons and daughters have gone forth to found the vast Dominions over the whole Globe, which are British to the core and are not only loyal but proud of being so. The War showed us how ready the Colonies were to shed their life's blood for the Empire and all that it meant to them.

It is a touching thing when one travels for instance to that wonderful land, Canada—probably to become the greatest country in the world—to hear folk who have been born and reared there, referring to England as “Home”; it comes naturally to their lips and they mean it. And what a nursery our country is for sending out sons who have spread our fair name and fame in all the corners of the earth. The Elizabethan rovers like Raleigh and Drake, the circumnavigators like Captain Cook, the statesmen like Clive and Hastings, the explorers like Livingstone, Hudson, Speke and Grant, Shackleton and Scott, are names which are little more than a suggestion of the long Roll of Honour which recounts the deeds that won the Empire. Our history is rich in the stories of soldiers, sailors, administrators and merchant princes who have planted the Union Jack so firmly and well in our Colonies and Protectorates.

Rudyard Kipling’s line on how little they know of England “who only England know”, is indeed true. It is only by travel, and by travel far and wide, that one can begin to realize our country’s greatness, and it is likewise only by travel that one can appreciate the joys of homecoming. In the cold wastes of Hudson Bay, in the mosquito-infected swamps of Central Africa, or holding court in the trying heat of an Indian summer or the jungle of Burma, there our young men can be found toiling to do their best, one and all looking forward to the day when they can get back. Back to England and all that it means to them.

See that opalescent morning mist with the glorious large red orb pushing its way through. It reminds me of a sunset on the desert. Then the haze lifts, the greys and blues and pinks and filmy little clouds might be the Equator near Ceylon.

Day advances. The poetic haze rises. The hour of mystery has passed, and perchance by midday the sky is as blue as Italy, or by evening, as green as Peking.

Then watch that fireball of departing day. Nowhere in the world have I seen finer sunsets than in London.

We eleven million souls (the same population as Canada) are so dull and so unimaginative that we cannot think anything of our own is beautiful, so we must buy a ticket to some other land before we can enthuse, and then we enthuse because we have paid money for that ticket.

England in Spring. The village common with its waddling geese, its clumps of saffron-flowered furze, its stray cow or calf, its playing children in the daytime, and young lovers strolling

in the evening is a wondrous sight, of which my eyes never tire. Glorious rural England.

Near by, perhaps, is the old Norman church, a pond with tame mallards at which the picturesque Clydesdales slake their thirst on the way home after a day's ploughing. Alas, that so much of this fair land is being plastered over with advertisements and petrol pumps. For this, more than for anything else, I regret the passing of the Victorian age, the days of our grandmothers. Those dear delightful Victorian days when people lived in real homes, with real home comforts, and had servants who knew their jobs and yet were part and parcel of the family circle. Our grandmothers with their knitting seemed to manage things extremely well, for in those days women did not have to work for their livings.

But we did have one awful thing in those good old Victorian days—we women, and that was our clothes. We had far too many of them, stiff brocades, heavy velvets, hard whale-bones and tight high collars; our hats mountainous and befeathered till Queen Alexandra introduced a tiny bonnet for elderly people. Forty years later instead of too many clothes, we have come to have too few.

Before Queen Victoria's reign came to a close one quarter of the whole Globe was under the British flag and this little lady's rule. Her British Empire included one person in every five of the world's population. Think of that. If this England of ours had not been honest, just and loyal to all the best interests of her subjects, could she ever have attained such omnipotence, or such allegiances? Most assuredly no. We owe so much to these splendid sons, that race of born colonial administrators who had courage, energy and vision and who won the confidence of all with whom they came in contact. To take but one example, for this is an entrancing subject, think of the great Raffles, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, who foresaw the importance of the Straits Settlements and who, out of a dank mangrove swamp, founded Singapore which is now of such importance and the "Clapham Junction" of the Far East. Singapore is an island like the Isle of Wight. It is one of the richest jewels of our Empire and is a halting station on the way to Australia and New Zealand, and we owe it to the vision of that one non-self-seeking British Government official, Raffles.

To my mind one of the most interesting bits in the history of our British Empire and one which has generally escaped

notice, occurred in the Ashanti War of 1900 while the South African War was occupying public attention. Joseph Chamberlain, who was at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies, made up his mind to put an end to the savageries of the Ashantis who had made themselves so troublesome to our administration on the Gold Coast. He sent an expedition under the late Major-General Sir James Willcocks to subdue King Prempeh's subjects and to bring peace to West Africa. And Willcocks did it entirely by British black troops led by British officers. In this expedition were the West Indian Regiment from Jamaica, Sikhs from India, King's African Rifles from Nyassaland, Housa Artillery and the West African Regiment, all speaking totally different languages, but obeying British words of command and all animated by the utmost loyalty to their Great White Queen in London. This expedition was completely successful and in not one instance did the slightest note of disloyalty occur. Since we went to Africa, cruel inter-tribal ways and savagery have disappeared and there are now millions of negroes living happy, contented and useful lives. And it is wonderful with how few administrators this fortunate state of affairs has been brought about. I have seen young men in their twenties, who but a few years before had been care-free public schoolboys, administering districts half the size of England—and doing it well. The predominant note in our British Colonial and Protectorate systems has always been that of what our American friends call the "square deal". The lowest coolie who may fancy he has a grievance against a foreign trader knows that he can be heard in the Law Court in a perfectly impartial way. There is as much loyalty to the British Crown in the heart of the Central African negro or the Creoles of Mauritius, the Malays of Singapore, as the fuzzy-haired Fijian. But we must uphold our administration overseas and trust the men on the spot.

In theory I have always objected to missionaries. What right has anyone to suppose that his religion is better than that of anyone else, or, worse still, to announce that his religion is the only true one in the world? But the medical missionary does splendid work. In tropical sweltering heat, surrounded by all sorts of sick natives often with loathsome diseases, he toils daily, patient and resourceful, giving them the benefit of his scientific, medical and surgical skill. In his one-man hospital he daily performs operations and sets fractured limbs, and he

must do it well or these people would not continue to trust themselves to his care in such numbers as they do.

My old friend, Dr. G. E. Morrison—the famous *Times* correspondent—was the first person I ever heard speak warmly of missionary work in China. He was originally far from being an admirer. In his earlier days he made a long journey right across the country from Peking to Burmah, and he published an account of his travels, "An Australian in China". In it he sarcastically criticized missionaries whom he had met and he told me that when he came to know more about them and all the good work they did, he devoted every penny he could to buying up all unsold or other copies of his book as he so deeply regretted what he had written. . . .

Only people who have been in London in August and September can realize its beauties. There are long nights, the views are clear and bright and brilliant, the hazes and vistas vie with Italy. And the marigolds bloomed on my balcony. Or let me own one, and only one, marigold the first year; but I brought him in, turned him round five times, and made a group of five on a bit of black paper. As that first marigold had to be immortalized. Thus it was I turned my attention to flowers, or rather flower painting. Everyone seems to paint flowers; it had become a modern craze, and what everyone could do, there was surely no reason why somebody else should not try. Accordingly the flowers from the roof-garden had to be dumped into little pots to match their colouring, and purple sweet peas had to be arranged into an iridescent purple glass vase. The nasturtiums grew, and apparently loved the atmosphere of London's heights, and so on, until the little gallery of flower pictures and little indoor and outdoor scenes from the balcony and flat, grew week by week.

That wonderful weather (1928) went on until nearly Christmas, and then, as if all the furies had been bottled up for months, they burst forth, and December and January were cold, snowy, icy, damp, foggy, miserable. They were accompanied by a perfect epidemic of illness, wafted across from the United States, where 'flu was virulent. I see that the *Daily Sketch* mentioned on March 10th that I had four inches of snow on the balcony. The only time in nearly six years. . . .

It was during these terrible months that the poor King was so ill, and I used to look down from my exalted perch which caught

every glimpse of sun from the south, to the less fortunate Royal quarters looking due north in Buckingham Palace. His Majesty lay in every fog there was, and must have watched the dripping of the trees in Constitution Hill till he was weary of seeing them. No invalid was ever less suitably placed than our Royal Sovereign during those terrible months. The architect who built Buckingham Palace had no idea of the benefit of sunshine, so the stables, the kitchens and the administrative offices are all on the south, the public rooms and galleries are on the east and west, and the unfortunate Royal Family look due north, and Buckingham Palace stands on a marsh. Being myself a sun-worshipper I always feel sorry for those who do not get its full power.

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Not long after my return from China, I was asked to broadcast. The B.B.C. authorities invited me to go to their office in Savoy Hill to try my voice and suggest subjects.

I did.

Voice "Excellent" was the note made on a card. I gathered from them that a high proportion of the voices tried cannot for some reason or other be heard and are rejected. The vibrating tones are such that the electric waves which should carry them through the ether cannot convey them. It is all a matter of voice-production, for some there are who can speak in a whisper and yet it carries. My voice being all right, the next question concerned was the subject of my Talk.

Now, thought I, here is a fine opportunity to tell the public of what I saw in Russia (1925). So I suggested *Russia in Rags*.

"Impossible," was the reply. "We dare not put on anything about Russia; it would create such a hubbub."

China in chaos.—"Just had China."

A Siberian railway accident. "Excellent."

"But it is Russia."

"Oh, not in name—so let us have that—1,300 to 1,500 words—time, twelve to fifteen minutes to read, and send a copy—five clear days before, please."

Settled. Off I went. Wrote my article and sent it in.

On the fourth day the telephone rang during the afternoon when I was out. The following morning it rang again. Agonized condition of the head gentleman.

"We simply dare not have anything about dead or dying, because of the hospitals. You have made the story too tragic

and dramatic." (I think of the change by 1932 when the broadcasters frighten even me.)

"Well, really, you couldn't expect me to write a comedy round a railway accident."

"No—but you are broadcasting to Great Britain—Great Britain of four million listeners—and we must be careful. You may even be heard in Cairo or Jerusalem. Could you take out that sad part—and tone it down?"

"No, I can't. I would rather do nothing."

"Please don't say that, we want you—we have advertised you, and we want you."

"All right, leave it to me, and I'll do something else."

Result, hurriedly put together the story of "Amah" (my Chinese maid) and paid again for the typing.

But the real horror came that night.

The B.B.C.'s building was on the Embankment. I got there twenty minutes before the time and sat with other victims waiting to be mysteriously called by a commissionaire. No one spoke, everyone looked at everyone else, apparently everyone felt miserable. They looked it.

Henry Ainley and Fay Compton were ahead of me, Sir Landon Ronald after me. Everything was late, and everyone was excited and worried.

At long last my turn came. The commissionaire beckoned me forth. Up in a lift, grabbing two copies of the MS. and along a passage with strange red lights on different doors. A gentleman in dress clothes met me. And into a small room we went. Its walls were hung with folded grey curtains, its ceiling ditto. Its floor appeared to have many folds of carpet, in fact it was so padded and subdued it seemed like a padded cell of a lunatic asylum, not a cheerful place. Then proceeds the gentleman:

"I have to read out the news bulletin. When a red light goes on, not a sound please, or four millions of people will hear it. Don't turn over the leaves, or cough or sneeze or——"

I felt at once I must cough or sneeze or turn over leaves or do something stupid.

He read his weather forecast and football news—and I felt myself getting colder and colder. Four million people. Suppose every one of those four millions could not hear one word of my endeavour to amuse them—suppose——

Then he stopped, caught my skirt, slipped out of the seat

opposite that awful little brown box which reminded me of the wooden top of a sewing-machine, only it was gauze or something, and pulled me into his seat with his fingers to his lips to say "Hush".

Oh—what a moment. Where was I—where was the MS. that must not be rattled—where were those four millions—I felt dazed and stupid beyond words. And when the words at last came, the room was so padded I did not recognize my own voice. But when once started it is not really so bad. I did not have to think what I would say next, for there it was in front of me. All that I had to concentrate on was to be calm and enunciate as clearly as I could and pay attention to the commas and full stops ; but alas there was no sound of friendly response.

It seemed to me to be much the same as if one were to address some sort of reverie in the catacombs of Rome hoping that one's words would reach the far-off souls which had sped from all these silent lifeless skulls. One speaks into that receiving box, from which the unseeable, impalpable sound leaps out into the darkness only to come to rest when it reaches the eardrums of the myriad unseen listeners.

How very different is the lonely Broadcaster from the polished orator whose thoughts flow while he speaks to a sea of upturned faces following his every word, applauding all the points he makes and urging him on to further endeavours.

However, there it was ; my task had come to an end and I stepped back conscious of having struggled through an agonizing ordeal. Next morning I got a card from a friend, saying :

"It was very clear and distinct and moreover given with an air of distinction. We liked to hear about your old Amah and her ways. Many congratulations."

Other letters in the same strain arrived, so I suppose I must have come through it all right. But it was an awful ordeal in 1926.

I think it was on a Sunday, two or three years later, between six and seven in the evening, upon taking up the head-phones of my wireless set, I first heard :

"Australia speaking."

"Australia calling."

"Do you hear me ? I am Sydney, Australia."

"Australia speaking."

"Do you hear me ? I am Sydney, and it's the dawn of day over here. The sun is just rising behind the mountains. Australia speaking."

Not three years after I had heard that mysterious voice, "Australia calling", on my wireless set, Stanley Bruce, for seven years Prime Minister of Australia, was speaking by wireless from the City of London, wooing his constituents thirteen thousand miles away on the other side of the world.

On December 18th, 1931, Mr. Bruce's fate was sealed; when the ship bearing him home was somewhere near Suez, he heard of his re-election.

The pith of the whole speech was his remark that Great Britain had always led the world and that the world was now waiting to be led again, that Australia had gone through parlous times, that she had cut her wages down by twenty-five per cent and Australia had accepted that reduction in a spirit of which he was proud. England must do the same.

He laughingly remarked that when he was in Australia he managed to lose his seat, so possibly when he was not there he might win it. Which he did, with a seventeen thousand majority. What will his future be? London?

Meantime we will step backwards.

* * * * *

"I want to go on the stage," declared a girl as she sat one day opposite her father, a London physician, in his consulting-room.

The doctor looked up, amazed, deliberately put down his pen, cast a scrutinizing glance at his daughter, then said tentatively:

"Want to go on the stage, eh?"

"Yes, I wish to be an actress. I have had an offer—oh, such a wonderful offer—to play a girl's part in the forthcoming production at one of our best theatres."

Her father made no comment, only looked again steadily at the girl in order to satisfy himself that she was speaking seriously. Then he took the letter she held out, read it most carefully, folded it up—in what the would-be actress thought an exasperatingly slow fashion—and after a pause observed:

"So this is the result of allowing you to play in private theatricals. What folly"

The girl started up—fire flashed from her eyes, and her lips trembled as she retorted passionately:

"I don't see any folly, I only see a great career opening before me. I want to go on the stage and make a name."

The doctor looked more grave than ever, but replied calmly:

"You are very young—you have only just been to your first ball; you know nothing whatever about the world or work."

"But I can learn, and intend to do so."

"Ah, yes, that is all very well; but what you really see at this moment is only the prospect of so many guineas a week, of applause and admiration, of notices in the papers, when at one jump you expect to gain the position already attained by some great actress. What you do *not* see, however, is the hard work, the dreary months, nay years, of waiting, the many disappointments that precede success—you do not realize the struggle of it all, or the many, many failures."

She looked amazed. What possible struggle could there be on the stage? she wondered.

"Is this to be the end of my having worked for you," he asked, pathetically, "planned for you, given you the best education I could, done everything possible to make your surroundings happy, that at the moment when I hoped you were going to prove a companion and a comfort, you announce the fact that you wish to choose a career for yourself, to throw off the ties—I will not call them the pleasures—of home, and seek work which it is not necessary for you to undertake?"

"Yes," murmured the girl, by this time almost sobbing, for the glamour seemed to be rolling away like mist before her eyes, while glorious visions of tragedy queens and comic sou-brettes faded into space.

"I will not forbid you," he went on, sadly but firmly—"I will not forbid you, after you are twenty-one, for then you can do as you like; but nearly four years stretch between now and then, and during those four years I shall withhold my sanction."

Tears welled up into her eyes. Moments come in the lives of all of us when our nearest and dearest appear to understand us least. Even in our youth we experience unreasoning sadness.

"I do not wish," he continued, rising and patting her kindly on the back, "to see my daughter worn to a skeleton, working when she should be enjoying herself, taking upon her shoulders cares and worries which I have striven for years to avert—therefore I must save you from yourself. During the next four years I will try to show you what going on the stage really means, and the labour it entails."

She did not answer, exultation had given place to indignation, indignation to depression, and the aspirant to histrionic fame felt sick at heart.

That girl was the present writer—her father the late Dr. George Harley, F.R.S., of Harley Street. . . .

During those four years he showed me the work and anxiety connection with the stage involves, and as it was not necessary for me to earn my living at that time, I waited his pleasure, and, finally, of my own free will abandoned the girlish determination to become an actress. And some years later I wrote "Behind the Footlights", which some kind critics thought one of the best stage books written. Wild dreams of glory and success eventually gave place to more rational ideas. The glamour of the footlights ceased to shine so alluringly, as I realized that the actor's art, like the musician's, is ephemeral, while the work and anxiety are great in both.

The restlessness of youth was upon me when I mooted the project, and an injudicious word then would have sent me forth at a tangent, probably to fail as many another has done before and since. There may still be a few youthful people in the world who believe the streets of London are paved with gold—and there are certainly numbers of boys and girls who think the stage is strewn with pearls and diamonds. All the traditions of the theatre are founded in mystery and exaggeration; perhaps it is as well, for too much realism destroys illusion.

Boys and girls dream great dreams—they may fancy themselves leading actors and actresses, in imagination they dine off gold, wear jewels, laces and furs, hear the applause of the multitude—and are happy. But all this, as said, is in their dreams, and dreams only last for seconds, while life lasts for years. One in perhaps a thousand aspirants climbs to the top of the dramatic ladder, dozens remain struggling on the lower rung, while hundreds fall out weary and heart-sore before passing even the first step. Never has the theatrical profession been more overcrowded than at the present moment.

Many people with a wild desire to act prove failures on the stage, alas their inclinations are greater than their powers. Where thousands join or try to join dramatic schools the percentage who never get on the stage at all—often spending their money too—is appalling.

The last remark of the feeble-minded idiot is to say: "I can't help it, I was made that way."

The genius says : "I'm a self-made man." We can strengthen and improve our bodies, and we can build up and make our characters and minds if we have grit.

Where one brain can think, another allows itself to sink.

It takes a big man to play the game of life in a big way. Some men can only run straight in adversity, others go wrong and stoop to dirty tricks when troubles fall.

People who do big things are almost universally modest. They are influenced by surroundings, they bask in the sun and shiver in the blast. They feel acutely and think intensely. They suffer ; but they ultimately disentangle the webs of thought and give out of their best. No great book was ever written, no great picture was ever painted, without intense joy and intense suffering to the artist. Genius alone cannot attain.

In June, 1931, I received a letter from an old friend, Mrs. Strode Jackson, whom I had not seen for over thirty years, which brought back vivid memories of those early acting days :

"When you came in," she said, "I was reminded of the girl of sixteen again. It was really wonderful : I was doubting if we would recognize each other. We met last I think at a reception and then only for a few minutes. But you were sixteen when you played Lady Franklin in *Money*, and 'Hester' in *An Unequal Match*, and Lilian in *New Men and Old*.

"All these characters stand out vividly in my memory. You were undoubtedly a marvel in those days. I have seen all the brilliant actresses of the stage from that time to this, but none more spontaneously, humanly attractive. You *were the part* whether as Belinda in *Our Boys* where you refused to 'black the lodger's boots', or Lilian when you begged your would-be lover to remember 'the peacock with the one eye' and broke the audience into tears and laughter. It is strange how these points come back to me as I write."

So perhaps after all I ought to have gone on the stage. W. S. Gilbert often tried to persuade me to do so.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY MARRIED DAYS

Happiness and Youth—A bolt from the blue—Rich and poor—Bills haunt one—Resort to Journalism—The Author's Pension Fund—My interview with Sir Walter Besant—Racing and hunting—Derby days—Old memories—Favourable home environment—The name "Alec"—Dr. Alexander Tweedie—Morocco—The Prima Donna next door—My second book—A generous offer refused—Busy years—The boys as babies—The yellow macaw—My old lady—A wire in Lapland—Proposals—Thoughts on marriage and love—Marriage settlements—Plunged into Journalism—Work and sleep.

EVERYTHING seemed gay and bright in the early days of my married life, and I found time one continual joy. . . .

During the racing season my husband and I attended race meetings and for five years we still hunted sometimes.

Alec was a member of Sandown, of Hurst Park and Ranelagh, and we often drove down in the high park phaeton with a couple of smart cobs. Then dear Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Barrow, of Holmwood, Tunbridge Wells, always took us to the Derby, the Oaks and Ascot. We drove on his coach from their London home in Hyde Park Gardens, and changed the team half-way. He had a private box and a private dining-room on the race stand, with three or four servants in attendance, so we enjoyed everything de luxe in those young and happy days.

The last race meetings I attended were at Auteuil with Prince d'Arenberg, the dear old President of the Jockey Club in Paris, and Ascot in 1924, when my boy, Harley, and I spent the day together in the Royal enclosure.

On those Derby days what a packing of luncheon baskets and wine cases and even flowers for the table. With tea urns and food going in the boot of the coach. We all wore our best and set off in high spirits for a cheery day's outing. Oh, what fun we had. The drive itself was delightful and surprising, with real coaches like ours, humbler carriages, London hansoms, even old growlers (cabs) with their cape-draped, grey-coated cabbies, and push-bikes rolling along the road.

But—I never won anything in my life but once, a new hat at the Derby. Thirteen is my lucky number, however, whether on a cabin door, or a date in a month, or on a book “Thirteen years”; anywhere and everywhere three comes in. York Terrace, my bridal home, was 30. 32 was my flat at Whitehall Court. Twice 30 made 60 on the flat at Devonshire House. Yes, threes and thirteens seem to have pursued me.

Six years of laughter and chatter, of dancing and song, of playing with baby boys, seeing them off in their prams, and my husband to the City. Days of taking houses in St. Andrews, or Dornoch, at Aldeburgh or Folkestone, for the babies’ holidays and our golf and shooting.

We had had great jokes as to whether we would apply for the “Dunmow fitch” bestowed on couples who had never had a quarrel in the first year. It seemed rather courting newspaper publicity, so we decided not to. An old aunt, Mrs. Richard Muspratt, of Cornist Hall, Flint, filled the loss and sent us a huge fitch of her own bacon instead.

My husband was brought up at 47, Brook Street, that fine house where his grandfather, famous old Dr. Alexander Tweedie, F.R.S., lived. Sir Bland Sutton, the great surgeon, took over his lease and built his Babylonian Hall over part of the stables, and in 1930 sold it to Claridge’s, who a year later turned it into a great ballroom, etc.

The colleagues of Dr. Alexander Tweedie in London gave him one of the first repeater watches with a wonderful fob in recognition of his founding the first Fever Hospital in the world in 1802, also a famous tea-service, both of which I have given to the Royal College of Physicians, where they repose in Trafalgar Square under the portrait of Dr. Tweedie which the Physicians already possessed.

Not long after I was married we went to Morocco. It was a quaint, delightful place then. No roads and no vehicles, and we went out to dine in a sedan chair.

One of our rides was with the famous Bibi Carlton about whom Cunninghame Graham wrote such a delightful book (Bibi was half-English by birth and wholly Arab by temperament); he took Miss Russell-Roberts and I to tea in a harem. He stayed outside.

I was given a cake with my mint tea. A large cake, bigger than the top of a breakfast cup, a sort of pasty thing about an inch thick, full of currants and spice like a Lancashire Eccles



Aged seven



Aged seventeen

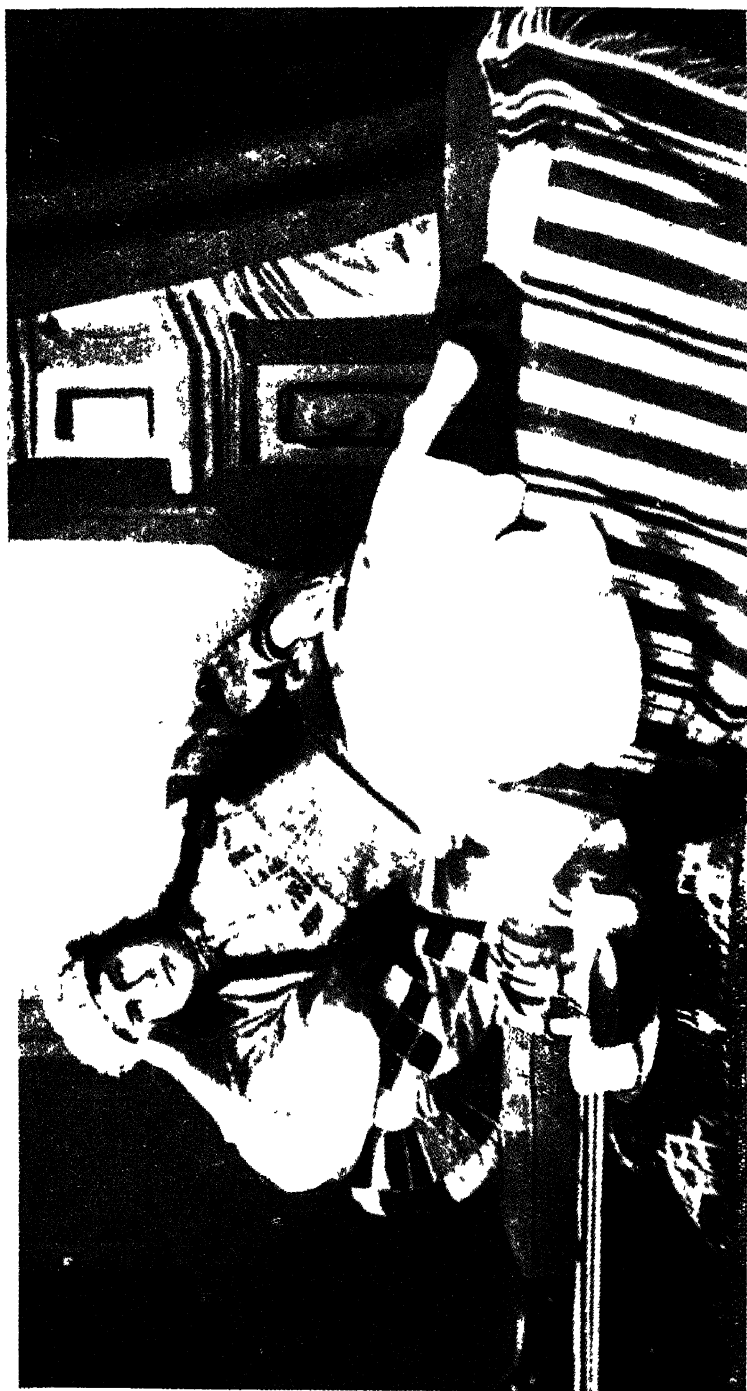


Off to Russia, 1925



1915

Myself



Author in Morocco dress, 1908.

cake. Heavens. It was made with rancid butter. Rancid butter is its speciality. I spat the lump into my hanky and finally, in real despair, for I should have been sick, I got a large portion of it stuffed down my riding boot. Thus it looked as if I had really swallowed some of the most disgusting cake I ever tasted. Since then I've learnt to eat many queerer things, in many queerer places.

* * * * *

On our return from Morocco we found the babies and parrot flourishing.

For five years the babies had a wonderful blue and yellow macaw. She came from a friend of my husband's, and was about twenty years old when she came. She was lovely to look at, jumping about on her perch (not in a cage), and talked incessantly. She yelled "Harley" or "Leslie" when she heard them on the stairs and danced about wildly till they were lifted up to scratch her head.

Polly was a family institution. Polly went out in the garden, on the pram handle, Polly even went to Scotland where we had a small house for my husband to shoot and play golf. We took a large saloon coach to bear us all to Dornoch in Sutherlandshire. The car was shunted about and after some twenty hours we landed at our destination. Polly was the cook's particular care (we took the servants up) and as Polly could not stand on the perch, every jolt of the train upsetting her nearly to strangulation, Polly used to be rolled round in a shawl, well safety-pinned down, looking like a bolster, and reposed most of the way in the cook's arms who refused to part with her charge.

Arrived at Dornoch, Polly became a *succès fou*. No one there had ever seen a blue and yellow bird that size. The moment the school came out, all the scholars rushed to the gate to talk to Polly. Polly loved attention, and Polly learnt Scotch.

One morning when a very solemn service was going on in the church near by, Polly gave a demonstration of her lungs to attract attention. She certainly succeeded. Even the Meenister smiled and looked perturbed, and the Collie dogs rose in their pews, thinking the service was over.

Then came the day when Kindergarten came into the children's lives, and Polly was getting old, so it was decided Polly should be relegated to the Zoo. Accordingly Polly was packed up in her shawl again, and I drove her in state in the phaeton and pair and deposited her at the Zoo. My husband

and the children constantly went to see her on Sundays, and she was always very excited and very noisy when she saw them approaching. She was there quite happily for about six months. One day they heard her yelling and calling "Harley" and "Leslie", for she had espied them as usual afar off. They saw something happen. Polly had fallen. The keeper rushed forward. Polly was picked up. Polly was dead. Excitement had been too much for the dear old nursery pet. . . .

We had been married seven years. And then, when the sky was blue, the bolt fell.

Suddenly all was changed. My husband had joined a syndicate and the syndicate had failed. He had lost—lost heavily. Lost his capital. . . .

Immediately our household was reduced to modest limits. Our drawing-room was shut up, three servants dismissed, five horses and two carriages sold. For the first time in my life I was without a carriage. But as Alec felt sure of earning money again shortly, we did not part with anything which with our lowered income it was possible to keep.

* * * * *

Yes, it was an unlucky day my husband joined that syndicate, for the syndicate failed—he lost everything. He never smiled again. He, the cheeriest, jolliest of men, a sportsman and renowned for his good looks, simply died in his sleep the day after he had paid up the last thousands of British railway stock, and I was left with two little boys to face the world. . . .

It was on the borders of Lapland that I received the wire containing an offer to take my house off my hands ; and so began my first "let". Six years later, when strenuous effort had made it possible, I went back to live in that same old home. . . .

What years of anxiety some of those were, when the house would not let and the bills would come in. Tenant succeeded tenant and between while I wandered.

There are only two crimes in Society : one to be poor, the other to be found out.

It seems to me that everything in life is relative. If one is born poor, one does not know what it is to be rich, and if one is merely rich, one does not understand the responsibility of strawberry leaves.

If things change, if one goes up in the world, one naturally

assimilates ideas and ways by just taking on a little more of what one already has ; but if one slides back in life, one has to give up what is part and parcel of one's very existence. I was not born in a back street or a country cottage or a suburban villa—in either of these I might have lived in simple comfort on my very small income—but that would not have been *me*. . . .

Bills came in on every side. Bills haunted me. Bills were nothing in my old life when they were paid up every month ; but even a few hundreds meant sleepless nights of haunting fear to me then. What on earth was I to do ?

I took up my pen feverishly. Years of married life were ended. All was changed. Still, during those first ten weeks of shock, my father yet lived, and I knew I could rely on his help, so it was not until the winter of 1896 that I realized my position in all its cruelty. . . .

Pause, readers, not to give me your sympathy, not to shed tears on what is past, but to think of the future ; pause and think, and pave the paths for your daughters, wives, mothers and sisters. Provide settlements for them.

Yes, *settlements*. It is a cruel thing to let a girl leave a home without a safeguard in proportion to the income of her family. It is a crueller thing to bring boys and girls into the world with insufficient provision for their education and maintenance.

This book will have served one good purpose if one father, husband, son or brother sees what opportunities are lost by no adequate provision being made for dependants, when this could so easily have been done. Settlements of some sort are as necessary as the marriage ring, a health certificate is as important as the marriage lines.

I feel strongly that every child born should have some kind of provision made for its education and maintenance and to give it a start in life. Both boys and girls should be treated exactly alike.

The children, to whose future I looked with such pride, were only at Kindergarten, a very famous one at Baker Street belonging to Miss Franks, when Alec died. In fact, Leslie, the baby, had not even arrived so far, so he and the black cat, walking beside or under his pram, went off under Henrietta's care to take or fetch the small Harley in long baggy sailor trousers with his sailor's cap with H.M.S. *Victory* on the band. It was the fashion to put small boys into absolutely correct naval

clothing at that time. It all came from the naval tailor at Portsmouth, and the wonderful never-daunted German Fräulein who came when they had passed babyhood copied the patterns exactly.

It was about this time that the Trio—oh, I forgot the cat—went off to the Westminster Bank in Stratford Place to do some business for me. The pram was left outside; but the baby was dumped down on the counter. As usual everyone passing remarked on his cherubic beauty.

"Oh, what a lovely little girl," remarked the ladies catching his fingers.

"I aren't a girl, I are a boy," replied the cherub of pink cheeks and golden curls.

It was before this time that besides a wonderful old Nanny I had a little under-nurse who was the daughter of a coachman in our mews. She was a nice little girl but an appalling Cockney. Naturally she played a great deal in Regent's Park with the children; but instead of her learning good English she taught them vile Cockney. Imagine my feelings to hear my child say: "I'd like a piece of *kike*, please."

It almost frightened me, but when I consulted my dear old Mother she assured me it didn't matter a bit, and they would drop Cockney as quickly as they learnt it when she left. In two years she left. In two days they had forgotten it.

Immediately after Alec passed away, Uncle John (Sir John Erichsen, President of the Royal College of Surgeons), came round to York Terrace.

I can see him now in that lovely dining-room overlooking Regent's Park. We talked. He was sweet to me, and then he said: "My dear child, something must be arranged for your future and the future of these two dear little boys. I have brought a little cheque, my dear, for you to put in the bank to save you trouble."

It was a very big cheque, a cheque I could have lived on for two years and more; but I was too proud, too self-confident to accept, and he went away hurt, and died soon after.

Looking back over those busy years, one still shudders at the recollection of working against time to get some particular article ready for the "printer's devil", who would call at 10 p.m. to take it off to the machines. I hated working at night, it made me nervous and stupid and flurried by turns, and never would I do it except under great stress: but stress often came

in those busy years and the day's work often lengthened on until one could positively think no more. A home to run, servants and children, all take time and energy, and there the man gains, for he does not bother with such things and is free to ply his own trade as he wills.

At first it was most difficult to dictate, but it had to be done after an attack of writer's cramp, and gradually I became so accustomed to it that I could dictate in half an hour a newspaper article that took from two to three hours to typewrite. Think of the time and labour saved, and so expert did I become at dictating, the flowers could be arranged or the chimney-piece dusted while I rolled off the stuff to the unfortunate secretary.

I look with amazement sometimes at my quixotic frame of mind at that time.

The unexpected change in my position showed me how kind the world can be, how good and generous the bulk of humanity is. There are certainly exceptions, and those generally where they should not be. But one does not think of them : one turns to the geniality and little acts of thoughtfulness that day by day come from friends in the truest sense of the word, and I can only wish that mine could realize to what extent they nobly greased the wheels of those working years. Little kindnesses are like flowers by the roadside or sun-gleams on a rainy day.

Long afterwards, when I was in great anxiety as to ways and means of obtaining a pension for the late Mrs. J. H. Riddell, whom I could no longer help, I went one day to see the late Sir Walter Besant at his office in Soho Square. He was surrounded—half-buried, in fact—by manuscripts, for he was then correcting his books on London—the really joyful work of his literary life. Volumes strewed the floor, volumes were stacked upon the writing-table, volumes lay pell-mell on the chairs. In fact, there was nowhere to sit or stand ; London on paper filled the room. He quite sympathized with my difficult task, but said there was no fund available to which one could apply ; so I asked if it would not be possible to form, in connection with the Society of Authors, some sort of Pension Fund for writers who had made fame but not fortune.

"Well, I don't know ; it might be," he said.

As I poured forth a string of enthusiastic suggestions the dear old gentleman listened calmly and quietly, gazing through his gold spectacles, in wonderment at my volubility.

"Not a bad idea," he remarked. So I collected several hundred pounds for Mrs. Riddell and handed them over to the Society. And not long afterwards the Pension Fund of the Society of Authors was formed, under the able Chairmanship of Mr. Anthony Hope, on the Committees of which I served for some twenty years. Mrs. J. H. Riddell was our first pensioner.

Besant was a real practical help to young writers. Quaint, old-fashioned, and prim, he addressed even his best friends as "Madam". It was largely his advice that started my penmanship. . . .

For five or six years I seldom lived in that home in York Terrace except to tidy it up and repaint it and get it ready for the next tenant. And then I began to feel I might begin again, and took an old lady and her maid to live with me and gave her three rooms to herself. I had her for two years. Then she came into a large fortune, "gave me notice", and left, and died almost immediately afterwards.

Book followed book, edition followed edition, and I constantly contributed to serious magazines like the *Fortnightly*, *Murray's* and *English Review*. For fifteen years I wrote for the Press as Mrs. Alec-Tweedie.

When I was first engaged it was a constant subject of interest to my friends that the man should have such an unusual Christian name as Alec. He was the fifth generation bearing the name, but outside that family the abbreviation did not appear to have penetrated. Times change, and twenty years later the name had become so common that I had the honour and felicity of seeing it used by a music-hall artist, and placarded on a boxing programme. Even a monk turned himself into a film star and his name was Alec. . . .

It was an awful thing to have a celebrated prima donna come and live next door, when one was working for a living; more than ever was it a tragedy that the season happened to be the summer and all the windows were open.

A very famous Italian opera-singer extremely excitable took a house near us, during one of her great seasons at the London Opera.

Apparently an Italian organ-grinder had heard where the prima donna was living. So he came down the street and ground his organ. She came to the window of the drawing-room, flung

it open, and sang to the accompaniment of the organ-grinder below. All the windows were pushed up in the street. All the heads in all the houses were pushed out and a tremendous excitement prevailed.

Then the prima donna threw money to the organ-grinder, who kissed his hands to her and she kissed hers to him.

This would last an hour or more. Then I would return to my proof-sheets.

Lo. Another tune from the organ-grinder. Was it possible? Yes.

But it was not the same organ-grinder.

No. 1 having made a good thing of it had apparently told No. 2 to come along. So here was No. 2, and the whole ceremony began again. Then we had No. 3 and No. 4, and day after day this terrible procession of organ-grinders serenaded the lady, who was still singing to them, still flinging money out of the window to them. It became so impossible that one had to ask the police to kindly stop the invasion. Years afterwards at Amalfi a man came up to my car and said:

"I was London. I speakee English."

"What did you do in London?"

"I was organ grinder. I bring money Amalfi, I farm in hills with London money."

Rather an interesting episode.

A few years after the Italian lady, the Police had to come and ask me to clear the street of 27,000 garments I had collected for Messina. That was the days before Mussolini and his great administration. He is not free from faults probably; but bristling with successes. Nothing and nobody was safe in Italy in 1922, and in 1932 everybody is safe everywhere. A great man.

Then came along dear old gentlemen—they weren't really old, but if I say they were, they will never identify themselves—who thought I might like to change my name; but rather like the famous dressmaker who said to a famous Duke: "There is only one — and there are several Duchesses, so I prefer to remain the one —"

So I preferred to remain the one Mrs. Alec-Tweedie.

A wise girl will go on being engaged. During that time she will get the best out of any man—Man is a hunter.

Once married, she will get the worst out of him. He will

probably wear her out through crass animalism and want of consideration.

* * * * *

What is love? Vanity. What is love? Conceit. What is love? Pap for the egoist.

Yes, that's love. The longing to be patted on the back; applauded to the face; congratulated by speech—put on a pedestal as a little god—Love is often spoon-feeding of human vanity. The bigger the spoon the more eagerly the receiver swallows its contents.

"Love is blind," are the three best words ever spoken, but one might add true love is sacrifice which means giving.

Few marriages are happy unless the man and woman each has an equal income. The French wife has her "dot" therefore she does not have to wangle for sixpences. The foreign officer cannot marry unless the wife has a fixed income of her own, or he his. In America the millionaire father lets his daughter leave his house oftentimes without a cent, and in Britain most women are handicapped and crippled by fathers and husbands thinking they don't want money.

More love is severed by wrangling over housebooks, than by unfaithfulness. Such sordid business details should never be discussed. Companionship should be of brighter mood.

Men are often spoilt by success—women are often improved by it.

Waste is both vulgar and stupid.

Millionaires are greater at getting than parting. Those who understand the latter are no good at the former.

Far-sighted people don't look for trouble.

The well-fed man is the best tempered. The selfish woman is the happiest.

A man once said to me—an important clever man:

"I believe a good many women who are married regret their marriage by the next morning after learning what a sensual brute the ordinary man can be. Women call it love in their pre-nuptial dreams, men know it is license and sensuality; the male is a hunter of scalps, women the prey of sentiment."

A marriage of passion is nearly always a failure, a marriage of love and wisdom is generally a success.

Yes, money is the curse of most marriages. A girl must be provided for by a dot as in France or Italy or even Germany. Her father brought her into the world, and should start some

insurance for her from that day, if he has not the private means to make a settlement.

If the young man can add to that settlement he should do so, and if the girl has earned money, as so many do, she should have her bottom drawer full. Anyway every girl should start on her matrimonial handicap with her own pound a week, or fifty pounds a week, properly settled by legal deed (before the marriage) and know that she and her children cannot actually starve.

. . . I have never forgotten my first essay in journalism. Chance so often steps in to foreshadow the important events of our lives. Everyone gets his chance ; but many do not recognize it when it comes. If we only accept small beginnings they often lead to big endings. My chance notebook on Iceland and some sporting articles in *The Queen* were the beginning of an income a few years later. . . .

I still remember with what joy I read a Leader in the *Daily Telegraph* on a magazine article of mine. It then seemed so great and wonderful to be mentioned in a Leader ; next to which comes my pride on seeing book reviews with my own name as reviewer above them in the literary page of the *Daily Chronicle*. These little vanities were the recompense for the dreary hours of work, when one's head ached and one's eyes felt hot and swollen and one's brain seemed on fire or asleep. Journalism is a hard task-master. Sometimes one has no ideas. At other times one has a plethora of inspiration and knows not which to choose. There was a time when I wrote five articles a week, and two of them were signed. It's the signature that costs the anxiety. Personally I feel nearly everything should be signed. The name carries weight and the writer is responsible. Presumably writing in an office is not so nerve-racking because if A is ill, B can take over. Not so the private individual. He or she must plough a lonely furrow and has no understudy to look up a date or a fact.

I look back to those days as a veritable nightmare, and yet remember with pride how there is hardly an important paper where I have not been represented at some time during those fifteen years of journalism.

Even to-day I am constantly rung up for "opinions". Reply always the same : "I never give opinions over the telephone," and ring off. Besides I refuse to give "free opinions" to anyone.

The worker should be worthy of his hire, and there are men

and women who want the money as I did once, and they must be asked and paid for their work. Talking of personal opinions, I remember a huge two volume book on General Diaz and Mexico. The *Morning Post* wanted two columns in a great hurry. I was off to Edinburgh but in that train I read the books for hours and hours and pencilled the article, wrote it in ink on arrival (one would have had it professionally typed these days) and posted it by midnight.

Yes, I smile when I think of the diversity of subjects I wrote on, and the diversity of characters I assumed with my pen. From a parent, a child, a man or a woman, youth or age all came along in turn to reproduce their point of view.

Sports of all kinds for *The Encyclopædia of Sports*, The Preface to Prescotts famous History of Mexico, the Oxford University Press, *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. Silly, gay, dull, intellectual, all came in turn. Every newspaper from *The Times*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, every review and magazine from the *Fortnightly* to *Pearsons*, or *The Strand*.

Every illustrated weekly, including the *Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*, and as an ex-journalist I thank them all.

Having told one Italian story in this chapter, here is another. It happened at quaint Ceprano, near Naples. My little car drew up on a market day. An Italian man appeared and, putting his hand on the car, said charmingly: "Me help you, laidy? I know London, laidy. I sell leetle dawgs London, laidy."

"Sell little dogs?"

"Yes, laidy. Sell leetle dawgs Fleet Street, laidy. Leetle dawgs jump. I knew Lord Northcliffe, Lord Burnham, Lord Rothermere, laidy. Can I help you, laidy? I rich man now, laidy, have farm and family all from leetle dawgs in London, laidy."

Well done, the Italian.

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CHAPTER V

A TINY SALON

London; three small worlds—Backbiting—Smart set—World no worse—Why is London so attractive?—Idle women—A party without a hostess—Lady Tree and Dame Madge Kendal—Press parties—Twenty-two men arrive—Luncheons and dinners—A galaxy of guests—Different parties—Royalty—A funny story—A night in Hyde Park—Rows of golden chairs—Gate-crashers—Cheap teas cadged.

TO have been "At Home" once every week for nearly forty years is something of a record. Nevertheless it is a true one, for unless in the Arctic or the tropics or somewhere more than half an hour's run from town, I have always received my friends during all these years.

Getting up when ill, staying up when tired, one has come back to town from distances, and if there is a virtue that may take one woman to Heaven, it is the persistency with which she has stuck to these days and the delightful sympathy of the friends who have clustered round, often to the tune of thirty or sixty in one afternoon. To be without a visitor has never been known. Never once has a blank been drawn—and this held good even through the War. Tea and a friendly welcome were all there was to offer, but men and women from all over the world realize both are there once a week—and they just come. That is all. People call it "the only salon in London". Of course, there are grand parties and great gatherings, but it is the very simplicity of those Days that makes them unique. Schoolfellows from kindergarten years, living now at odd corners of the earth, drop in if they are in London. Explorers from the North Pole or the South, diplomats from every corner of the world, every kind of man and woman has crossed the threshold. God bless them and their friendship.

Well, backed by the experiences of those afternoons, one is not inclined to be a pessimist, to moan over the past or decry the life and society and manners of our own day. Indeed are we all nowadays so very bad as some folks make out? Are we more corrupt, more vicious, more grasping than of yore?



Delphiniums.

London is so vast it may be divided into three small worlds : there is the aristocracy of birth, which is limited ; the aristocracy of brains, which is scattered ; and the aristocracy of wealth, which is so powerful it threatens to swallow up the other two. Of course, it is perfectly right for a man by his own exertions and wit to make a fortune, and many such men expend it wisely and are public benefactors ; though unfortunately they do not always acquire manners, nor do their minds expand in proportion to their money-bags, and many of the acknowledged leaders of London Society to-day have little to recommend them.

Again, some men are not so desultory as their wives, for naturally they meet with gentlemen in their business career, and the rough corners get rubbed off, while they learn to consider other people and to be punctual ; whereas the women, living in a smaller world, do not realize their own deficiencies and their disregard of others intensifies as their husbands' wealth increases. It is rather pathetic to see a woman, who a few years before had been living modestly on an income of £200 or £300, turn her back on an old friend while spending £70,000 or £80,000 per annum, and unable to buy new ones.

Of course, there are parvenus in London Society ; every sort and kind of man and woman must be found in a city of 11,000,000 inhabitants, and unfortunately these are the people who make an aristocracy of their own known as the "Smart Set", a title often synonymous with vulgarity and wealth. The folk who compose this Smart Set get up late, stroll down Bond Street to buy things they do not want, and scramble through luncheon-parties at two o'clock in order to be at the bridge tables at three, when they neglect their duties, friends, calls, everything, in fact, for the fascination of bridge. There are houses in town where they actually play from three to seven most afternoons in the week, continued, with the aid of cigarettes and cocktails, till one and two in the morning.

And there are magnificent men and women working voluntarily in every walk of politics, charity and philanthropy, and the work many modern women accomplish for the good of the world is stupendous ; the world is surely no worse than it used to be. There are fewer intrigues than in the days of the famous French Courts, there is less heavy eating and drinking than in the time of our grandfathers, there is more healthy, out-of-door life. The general culture may not be so profound in London as in Berlin, the extravagance in dress may be great, but surely

not so bad as a century or so ago ; and on a calm survey one sees it is only the flotsam and jetsam of Society that are corrupt and depraved. There are just as many charming homes as in days of old ; there is just as much chivalry, if less forcibly expressed in outward form, just as much kindness of heart to those in distress ; and London Society, although it appears so fickle on the surface, is true enough at the core.

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Why is London so attractive ?

Because it is so cosmopolitan. Every sort of man and woman is to be found within its charmed circle. Every kind of intellect, every sort of talent, the pick of everything, lives in the metropolis or pays a visit of homage to its shrine. The most brilliant and intellectual society in the world is to be found in the dirty old city ; the artist, the sculptor, the musician, the man of letters, the actor, each and all are welcomed in turn ; and it is a curious fact that the foreigners who land upon our shores, once over the first two or three months' home-sickness, appreciate the comforts of English home life to the point of never wishing to leave them again.

London has the best climate in the world. It is free from malaria, yellowjack, cholera, mosquitoes or reptiles, tropical rain or arctic snows, and although fog and rain may be inconvenient, the health record is remarkable. London is full to overflowing as it is, and people from all over the world find it the most desirable dwelling place. If our climate were beautiful all through, the entire population of the Universe would migrate to London. . . .

I once gave a tea party and wasn't there, being suddenly taken ill. A terrible hæmorrhage from over-work just after finishing the morning's task of moving furniture, putting out silver, etc., and by 12.30 I had collapsed. Mrs. Kendal and Lady Tree, both old friends, acted as hostesses as well as reciters, while I lay prone upstairs and had a nurse. I believe it was the best party I ever gave. That was in York Terrace days . . .

Naturally parties provide material for paragraphs in the Press. The *Yorkshire Post* one day in February, 1930, contained the following :

The new flats at Devonshire House are most attractive, and at a party a few days ago I had a glimpse of the Arabian Nights, writes a London friend, for not only was it filled with oriental treasures, but the roof garden surrounding it had countless huge terra-cotta jars out of which one felt Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves might step at any moment.

It was the home of Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, and in every room were vivid sketches of Russia, China, India, Mexico, Turkey, and all the far-off spots she has visited.

The hostess was dispensing Russian tea and roseleaf jam sandwiches to visitors from Manchuria and the Balkans when I arrived, and in her purple and cardinal red velvet tea gown (made, I fancy, from a cope) looked as brilliant as one of the poinsettias from her own conservatory.

She has lost none of the amazing vitality and good looks which made one years ago immediately ask who she was. I remember seeing her first at a dinner party sandwiched between Walter Crane, the artist, and Ray Lankester, the scientist.

She still invests everything she touches with colour, and one of the sketches I liked best was not of some far Himalayan peak or African plain, but a glimpse of London seen from her roof garden on Christmas Eve 100 feet up—a misty purple thing with the spires of Westminster at sunset, and the Byzantine tower of the cathedral looming up beyond Buckingham Palace tucked away in the Green Park below her terrace.

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On one of my afternoons, some twenty men arrived, including Sir Harcourt Butler, Lord Brentford, Lewis Baumer and General Sir Charles Melliss, V.C. Mrs. Gentwood brought a new book she had been reading called "Mixed Grill", by an anonymous writer. This bit from it pleased me—naturally.

"I regret never having passed many half-hours in the company of John Singer Sargent; but he was not like Sir Joshua Reynolds of the eighteenth century, or John Everett Millais of the nineteenth, in delighting to have about him troops of friends having some association with one of the Arts. I do not think there were half-a-dozen men in London who were on really intimate terms with him. The first time I met him was at a little dinner given by Hugh Glazebrook, the portrait painter, at his house in Elm Park Road, Chelsea.

"The guests were few and among them he was the only painter. Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, whose extraordinary resemblance to Raeburn's notable portrait of Mrs. Moncrieff somehow seemed to have the effect of making one feel that one was living in a world where only beauty had a place, was my delightful neighbour at the table. Every painter, in addition to our host, was craving a sitting from her, and John Lavery (now Sir John) was among the fortunate ones to whom she gave the privilege. I quite expected to hear that Sargent had a like aspiration, and I was looking forward to what could scarcely fail to be one of his most striking portraits. . . ."

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Glancing at some old lists I find that just after the War I had the joy of entertaining many dear old friends, alas, some of whom are no longer with us: Gen. Sir Charles Monro, John

Walter, Mons. Gennadius, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Hugh Chisholm, Sir William Bragg, F.R.S., Sir Chartres Biron, Lord Emmott, Miss Grainger Kerr, Gen. Sir Reginald Wingate, Admiral Sir Percy Scott, Sir W. Joynson Hicks, M.P., Hugh de Glazebrook, Frank Gordon Brown, Gen. Sir George Young-husband, Sir Ross Smith, Sir Arthur Willat, Richard Whiteing, Dame Genevieve Ward, the Italian Ambassador, Signor di Mastero, Sir Valentine Chirol, Dr. Francis Goodbody, Commander Paynton, the Norwegian Minister, Mr. Vogt, Newton Crane, K.C., Dean Inge, G. Freeman, Gen. Sir Sefton Brancker, Gen. Swinton, the Home Secretary, Mr. Shortt, Sir John Struthers, Sir Francis Blake, M.P., Field-Marshal Sir Wm. Robertson, Sir Edgar Barnard, Sir Robert Stout, Sir John McLeavy Brown, Gertrude Page, Gen. Dessino, Sir Thomas Sutherland, the Japanese Ambassador, Baron Hayashi, Harry Furniss, Chevalier Taylor, Sir William Acworth, Sir William Orpen, Miss Susan Strong, Dame May Whitty, Mrs. Kendal, Col. Laurie, Professor Simpson, Bernard Partridge, Sir Edward Ward, Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Boscawen, Muriel Lady Helmsley, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Sir Henry Dickens, Hugh Spender, Gen. Sir Bindon Blood, Sir Arbuthnot Lane, Sir Maurice de Bunsen, Lady Chelmsford, Admiral Irving, Capt. Hussey, Col. Picot, Maj.-Gen. Dickie, Professor Downer, Col. Maton, Air Vice-Marshal Vyvyan, Gen. FitzPatrick, the Belgian Ambassador, Baron Moncheur, Lewis Baumer, Sir Ernest Moir, Admiral de Courcy Hamilton, Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins, Ralph Knott, Madame Albanesi, Maj.-Gen. Sir Arthur Stoggett, Sir John Jordan, Gen. P. R. C. Groves, Sir Mayo Robson, Major Ian Hay Beith, Sir John H. Williams Skinner, Anning Bell, R.A., Sir Alexander Sprott, M.P., Sir George Younger, M.P., Air-Marshal G. Salmond, Philipps Oppenheim, Maj.-Gen. Haddock, Col. Sydney Muspratt, Mrs. Nesta Webster, Sir Charles Bright, Sir Percy Sykes, Mrs. Cecil Harmsworth, Sir Ernest Wild, Admiral Mark Kerr, Sir Reginald T. Tower, and their respected wives when they had them.

* * * * *

The two or three times I have had the honour of entertaining Royalty at my table, it is perhaps more courteous to say nothing than how highly my friends and I have appreciated their visits.

Punctuality is one of their gifts, graciousness another. Naturally both at public and private functions all the guests

assemble before Their Royal Highnesses, and no one leaves until after Royalty has departed. On one occasion (being a widow) I asked a famous Field-Marshal to play host for me and see Their Royal Highnesses off by the lift to their car.

He returned.

"Did you put them into their car nicely?" I asked.

"No."

"What do you mean?" I almost gasped.

"Well, you see, I couldn't very well. We walked to the front door down that wonderful Pompeian passage and I said to the gorgeous porter: 'Their Highnesses' car, please.'

"'Oh, we haven't a car,' laughed the Prince, 'we are walking.' And off they walked." . . .

* * * * *

Sir Robert Horne told a funny story at one of my lunches. He was crossing the Atlantic in an awful gale.

As a Charity Concert for Seamen had been fixed, they determined to go on with it, as Kreisler, Pachman and another great musician, who were on board, said they did not mind bad weather.

Lo, when the concert hour arrived, the elements had calmed, and once they began to play no one noticed the remaining wind.

When the subscription was taken £662 2s. 2d. was the result announced by Sir Robert who was the Chairman. He was a Scotsman, and someone in the audience called out:

"Where did you get the odd 2d. from, Jock?"

"I must have put it in myself," he replied, "or else there is an Aberdonian on board."

When he was handing over the money, he said:

"I find there is an Aberdonian on board, and he was lately married. He wanted to give something from himself, but that would have been one pound. Then he thought he would give one for his wife. Then he thought he would give three to include the baby. But he finally decided it must be two for himself, two shillings for his wife, and two pence for the baby."

Roars of applause all round.

Later on in the day, however, an irate gentleman came up and shook his fist in Sir Robert's face, and said:

"How dare you make that remark. I am the only Aberdonian on board, and I did nothing of the kind."

* * * * *

One day I lunched with Sir Wyndham Childs and his lovely white-haired, young-looking spouse at Claridge's. We were forty in a private room. As we shook hands, I said: "I was in Hyde Park at 2.30 this morning."

"What on earth were you doing?" he asked, aghast.

"I was sitting on a chair."

"Sitting on a chair?"

"Yes, and walking about."

"Walking about? Where were the police?"

"Oh, they escorted me out and unlocked and relocked the gates."

The ex-Chief of Criminal Investigation looked so distressed that I had to laugh and explain. "I was watching the first film being made in Hyde Park, viz., Galsworthy's 'Escape', with Sir Gerald du Maurier, and I had the permit for the second film, my own Pageant on Hyde Park, which was to be given a few weeks later."

* * * * *

As a rule I will not go out at night at 10 or 11 o'clock to sit in rows on golden chairs and listen to music, unless I have been out to dinner or the theatre. It seems to be a dull way of entertaining one's friends. It is no effort at hospitality, it is merely a case of paying the bill. If people really want a concert, let them go and buy a ticket and enjoy the concert in peace and quiet. If they want to enjoy their friends, let them meet and talk and enjoy one another's conversation. The art of conversation is not dead, although golden chairs have done their best to kill it.

* * * * *

How dare people?

Well, they do. And that's all there is about it. No form of wangling has been neglected to see my flat at Devonshire House. The usual formula is:

"I hear you have a lovely flat——"

"Quite nice."

"Oh, it must be lovely."

"Only four rooms."

"How you must love looking all day over the towers of London."

"One hasn't time for that in a busy life."

"I suppose the night is even more beautiful. I should love to see it."

And by this time, hemmed in by a crowd, unable to get away from hints and innuendoes, one feels inclined to exclaim :

"You really needn't say any more, for I do not intend to invite you."

As often as five times at one party I have been bombarded like this. A certain lady who I have avoided all my life, and who, when I did see her, always made some kind of remark of this kind, once nearly caught me. It was in the lift after a public lunch. She stopped me ; facing me in the squash she inquired :

"Still at that lovely flat ?"

"I've just been to Czecho-Slovakia."

"You're still living at Devonshire House, are you not ?"

"Yes." (Oh, what a slow lift, why doesn't it hurry up ?)

"I really must come and see you some day. I've heard so much about your view." (Will we never reach the bottom ?)

I said nothing. I was rude enough to say nothing. She got in last, so got out first, and as she left called back : "Well, I may pop in at one of your Teas, then." No reply.

* * * * *

Want of consideration is selfishness, just as shyness is conceit. Both mean self-centred thoughtlessness instead of considering other people. Irresponsibility accepts an invitation, the hostess prepares for the guest, who either turns up late or not at all. Irresponsibility dares to enter a theatre and disturb everyone, quite content as long as they find their own seats. Shyness is impolite, neither gracious nor helpful, because entirely self-centred in self-adoration and wondering what other people think. These other people would never think, but are compelled to do so by the self-centred, rude, ungracious conceit displayed under the name of shyness. One's own friends one loves : here is a letter from one of them :

* * * * *

"I did so immensely enjoy being with you yesterday," wrote a friend in 1931, "it is always a joy to see you, and the quiet drive to town, and the quiet time at your flat with the delightful little dinner *à deux* all filled up hours of real happiness. You are so wonderfully good to me, there is nobody else, only you and your sister, who have with unwearying kindness helped me to get back to an even keel to cope with things. It is just wonderful and I do thank you with all my heart. The atmosphere of your home is so exhilarating."

CHAPTER VI

FRIENDSHIPS—OLD AND NEW

Town v. country life—'Flu epidemic of 1929—Heavy toll of my friends—Random reminiscences—Howard Carter and the Egyptian Government—Sir John Maxwell at the trial—Opening of Tut-anekh-amen's Tomb, and Lenin's Tomb—Sir Oliver Lodge and Spiritualism—Thoughts on life and death—Lord Allenby and the Stork—The Beet Sugar Industry—Sir Douglas Mawson—Dr. Nansen—Sir Basil Zaharoff—"The Mystery Man of Europe"—Sir John Simon—Reception at the Temple—Sir John's broken nose.

IN another book, in discussing the difference between town and country life, I have told of my predilection for the former on account of the greater opportunity for living amongst friends. To converse, to exchange thoughts, to help and be helped, to pass pleasant social hours with sympathetic people has always been a wonderful thing. Friendship has been the breath of life and conversation can be brilliant.

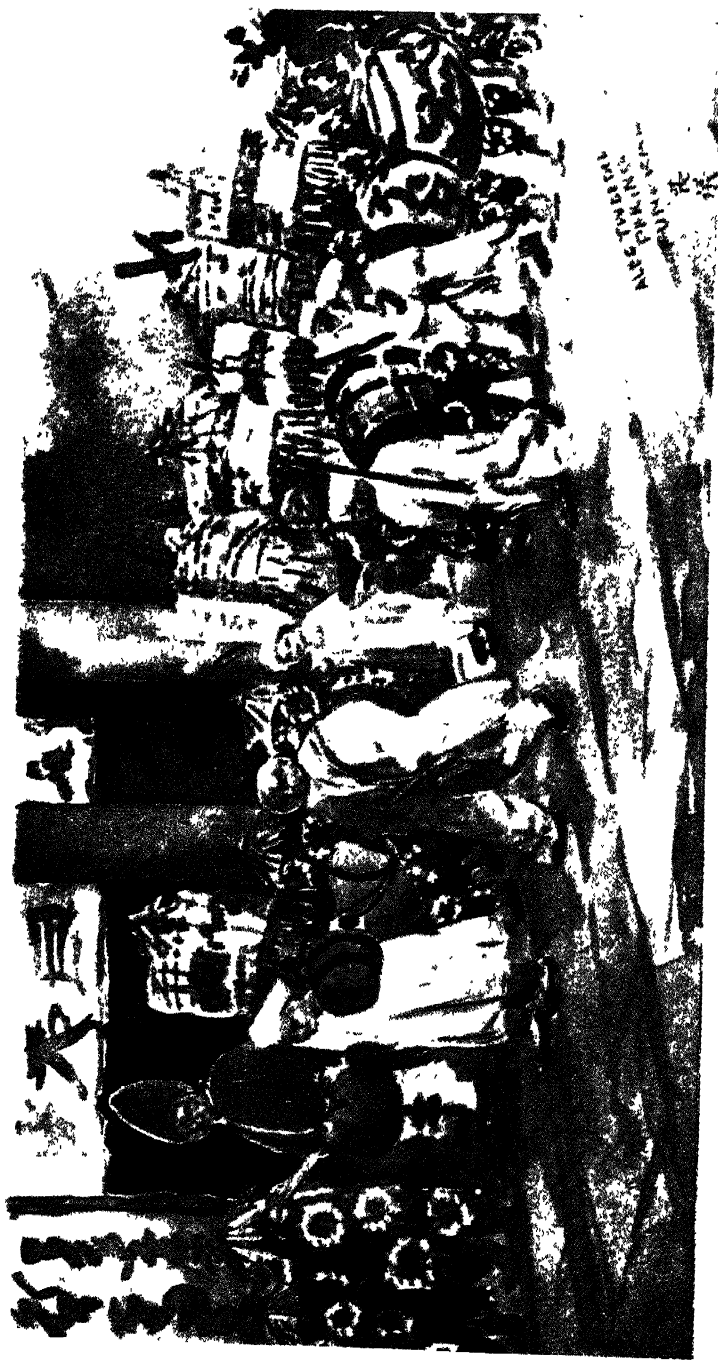
Alas, that when the years mount up, many of the most loved ones drop by the way, cut off by Father Time with his inexorable scythe. When one sees in the obituary column of the daily paper the name of a friend, there at once surges up within one a flood of memories of past times and scenes and one feels "Ah me. I shall never see that smiling face again." Gone for ever out of one's life and I am left to carry on, groping away as to the mystery of it all.

Sometimes when one sits down and tries to think it out, one is impressed with the unfathomableness (what a long word) of the Great Secret. And recalls the familiar lines :

"On entre, on crie,
Et c'est la vie.
On crie, on sort,
Et c'est la mort."

"One is born, one cries,
And that is life.
One cries, one dies,
And that is death."

* * * * *



Funeral in Peking

The influenza epidemic of spring, 1929, took a heavy toll of one's friends. It is a nasty insidious disease that, alas, doctors have not as yet found the means of combating, more especially with regard to the spreading of the disease from one person to another. My prescription is STOP IN BED.

The following is a list made out at the time of friends of many years' standing who were taken off by the 1929 epidemic between Christmas and Easter.

Ralph Knott, the brilliant young architect of the L.C.C. Hall.

Sir John Murray, the famous publisher, fourth in direct succession from the first John.

Dr. Von Bode, of the Berlin Museum, the veteran German art expert

M. Camerlynck, the eminent French scholar and translator at the Geneva Conference, a great friend of Harley's.

Lady Lodge, wife of the great scientist.

Herbert Hampton, the sculptor, who did the bust of me called the spirit of animation that stood at the top of the stairs at the Royal Academy, smiling on everyone who entered.

Sir Alexander Sprott, a brilliant Scot and Member of Parliament.

Admiral Sir Edward Fremantle, at the age of 93, the oldest British Admiral. He attended public functions right up to the last in a wheeled chair.

M. Messenger, the great French composer, whose wife, "Hope Temple," I used to see at Aix-les-Bains.

Mrs. Charles Hancock, one of the best-known hostesses in London Society and a very ardent Liberal.

Percy Anderson, that brilliant designer of theatrical costumes who revolutionized the British stage (he painted two water colour portraits of me).

Viscount Younger, one of my life-long friends, who used to come to my flat at Whitehall Court about six o'clock on every alternate Sunday during the war to have a chat (on alternate winter Sundays I had a hundred soldiers to tea, totalling over 3,000). George Younger was one of the most delightful companions in the world, and always cheery. His work for the Conservative party was stupendous.

Marshal Foch, the greatest soldier of the century and born leader of men, full of good humour, kindness and delightful stories. Both my boys served under him in France and he opened

the exhibition of my pictures at the Galeries Georges Petit in Paris in 1926. Dear old Foch held my hand in both of his before kissing them. We were then outside the crowded gallery.

"Thank you, Monsieur le Maréchal, merci."

"That is the least I could do, Madame, for the mother of two sons who fought in France, and one of whom lies in France for ever."

Of all my many friends no one perhaps was so many-sided as Lord Montagu of Beaulieu. He put his heart into everything he did, especially motoring, from the time when he stroked his college eight at Oxford.

Quickly on top of Lord Montagu's death at Easter, 1929, came the death of the Duke of Stacpoole, a bright-hearted Irishman whom I frequently met. He was a typical Irish Squire; a strict Roman Catholic, loyal to his King and keenly devoted to country sports. It was he who took the late Empress of Austria in hand when she hunted in Ireland, and throughout all the Irish upheaval he and the Duchess remained as popular as ever in their beloved County Galway.

That old friend of mine Lady Roxburghe, widow of a City Knight, was very well known in most drawing-rooms in London. Only a few weeks later her old brother-in-law, Lord Southwark, fell a victim at the age of eighty-five. Their house, near Madame Tussaud's, must have been the strangest house in London at that time, for this dear old couple who knew everyone and went everywhere refused to have electric light or gas, and always used candles, whether for dinner-parties, bridge parties or musical parties. Surely there could not have been another house in London that could claim such ancient ways in the year of 1929.

Please do not think that all my friends were seventy or eighty. But it was mostly older people who were swept off in the horrible winter of '29. Anyway two years later I saw Lady Southwark dancing at the age of eighty, she was a wonderful woman and I shall always associate her memory with King Alfonso. I knew her first when I was a child, and I never saw her without a smile upon her face. Her husband filled many public posts, took marvellous snapshots of trial trips of ships, and large shooting parties of which I have many, as we often met at these sort of functions. She was a great hostess in a quiet way and always appeared as pleased with her guests as

her guests were with her. A good conversationalist, a good musician, and a good pencil artist in a very old-fashioned style. London can ill lose one of these dear old ladies of the Victorian school, and she will be missed by a host of friends. She died at eighty (December, 1931) and looked the *grande dame* to the last; and still possessed a wonderful memory.

Only a week after King Alfonso left his throne in April, 1931, he arrived in London, according to the Press to put a son into the British Navy. About 9.30 on the night of his arrival King Alfonso and a man walked into the dining-room at Claridges where he was staying and where Lady Southwark was giving a large dinner. (I remembered we usually dined about 10 or later in Madrid.) They sat down about fifteen feet from me and in full view. The King ordered a very simple dinner, smoked cigarettes between the three courses, and then took a glance at our table of forty. Suddenly his eyes were arrested. He looked long, he looked piercingly. He said something to the Duke of Miranda beside him. He looked again. He had recognized Lord Jellicoe.

When our dinner was over and we were starting for a private room, King Alfonso sent the waiter to tell Admiral Jellicoe he would like to speak to him. They had a long chat. When the Admiral rejoined us, I said: "I saw King Alfonso recognize you," and told him the story of how he saw him.

"What a wonderful gift," he remarked.

"When did you see him last?" I queried.

"Let me think, in 1911 in Madrid, three years before the War. Twenty years ago."

Incidentally, the exiled Spanish King did not look forty-six, or as if he had lived through a Revolution. And he seemed so much more charming and affable than his pictures. So healthy and cheery and pleasant. . . .

Youth passed over the border as well as age. My own cousin, the son of Sir Max Muspratt, was only twenty-four in 1929.

Lord Finlay and Lord Phillimore were fine representatives of British Law and Justice. The latter was a great judge and a charming gentleman, with whom I was associated for three or four years in war work.

Our land is the finest in the world, but its traditions could not be kept up except by such men as these.

I first met Lord Finlay, another great judge and charming

gentleman and an old friend, old in years as well as friendship, on a P. & O. boat. A dear, delightful, courtly, young-old man. Recalling that my father and brother were both doctors, he told me about his coming of medical stock too and how he had graduated M.B.C.M. at Edinburgh University. But medicine had never appealed to him and it did not take him long to make up his mind he was "cut out" for being a lawyer. His career at the Bar was a brilliant one and the secret of his success was a prodigious memory which was almost uncanny in the wealth of detail it enabled him to memorize even in the most abstruse legal points. He was that rare man who enjoyed working for work's sake. He had no expensive tastes and when he retired from the wool-sack at the end of the War he refused to accept the pension normally attached to the Lord Chancellorship.

I knew General Mackinnon well, an eminent and delightful soldier, and recollect with pleasure that proud day for him in 1900 when he rode at the head of the C.I.V. (the City of London Imperial Volunteers) on his return to London after having done so well in the South African War. He was Colonel of the regiment when it was formed in London and took it out to South Africa and led it through all the engagements in Orange Free State and the Transvaal in which it took part. I have often thought Sir Henry was one of the most tactful and courteous men I have ever met. Both he and his wife devoted their lives to patriotic services. Lady Mackinnon was a remarkably good speaker with a bright, attractive personality. I do not think the Territorial and Volunteer Services are properly aware of the devoted way in which the General worked to reorganize them and bring them to a closer approximation to the high standard of the regular army. He was a firm believer in the reforms inaugurated by the late Lord Haldane, and the work of the latter part of his military career was principally concerned with advancing the interests of the Auxiliary Forces at the War Office.

The death of Sir John Maxwell reminded me of another of the most dramatic scenes I ever witnessed. It was at the Court in Cairo during the Carter case between the famous excavator and the Egyptian Government in April, 1924, when I was on my way home from the Far East.

The Egyptian Government, wishing to show its power had behaved strangely to Howard Carter, after the death of Lord Carnarvon. The story is a long one and intricate.

Anyway, the surprising little lawyer who had been cross-examining everyone on behalf of the Egyptian Government, tauntingly said something like this.

"I only wish Sir John Maxwell were here to refute that."

Sir John Maxwell was in California. He had married an American wife and had gone to the States to spend the winter there. At this dramatic time, when the little lawyer was laying such stress upon the fact that the great General, if present, would refute what had been said, the judge asked :

"Why is Sir John Maxwell not here?"

At that moment, the fine, grey-haired soldier rose up from the body of the hall and said :

"I am here, my Lord."

The little lawyer nearly fell flat. Sir John, it seemed, had been telegraphed for to California, had travelled as fast as the train could take him across America, and by boat across the Atlantic, and had actually landed in Cairo half an hour before this dramatic moment.

(Mr. Carter's ten years' work at the great Tomb ended in 1932 when the last of his finds went to the Cairo Museum.)

* * * * * * *

Two days later, in April, 1924, I had entered with the first seventy given that privilege the tomb of Tut-ankh-amen in the valley of the Kings of Luxor. Had seen that beautiful boy face—of three thousand years ago—with its majesty and dignity and the glorious golden workmanship and craftsman's arts in every form wrought by a great people. Splendid, regal Tut-ankh-amen in quiet simplicity and dignified magnificence lying in his sarcophagus. What a contrast.

One year later, on my third visit to Russia, I saw early in 1925 in Moscow a plebeian, bandy-legged little man with twenty-four paid soldiers with bowed heads to guard him in his glass museum show-case. A waxen figure lying on gorgeous scarlet satin pillows amid a blaze of electric light. The figure had a huge head with a bare forehead and tufts of red hair at the sides. A ruddy beard. The eyes were closed, and the modern black coat was covered to the waist by a rug, so that little of the hands were visible. Dramatic and theatrical. Thousands of people are weekly sold tickets to visit Russia's new God. And everyone pays for admission to see Lenin.

Russia has destroyed her old religion, she has torn up the religion of the people, and now she bids the younger generation

welcome at the shrine of Lenin—their Saviour—and worship him as their God.

The human element in Russia is being crushed into a machine, a great huge unmanageable machine, ground out on a five year plan. If it succeeds it will be through German and American engineers and, alas, good old British gold.

* * * * *

Another dramatic incident occurred at the hearing by the three judges, English, Japanese and American, of the famous trial in May, 1925, at Shanghai, at which I was also present. Some riotous Chinese students had attacked the International Police-station and had been shot down. The question at issue was whether the police were justified in shooting them.

The trial was chiefly notable for the conduct of the American Judge, who took a line of his own, not only in the examination of witnesses but in the issuing of an independent judgment in the form of a Minority Report quite opposed to the impartial judicial findings of his two colleagues. His methods largely nullified the value of the inquiry. But at one point the Sergeant who had been in charge of the Police-station was put into the box and gave answers to every point raised.

"Why did you give the order to fire?" asked the American judge.

"I HAD TO, SIR," was the loud, honest but simple reply. "I HAD TO, SIR." He had been raised in the discipline of the British Army with its dictum, "An order is an order," and when the point in his instructions had been reached that his men had to fire, he acted accordingly.

Never did I feel prouder of anyone in my life than at that good old policeman's way of answering in his splendid straightforward fashion. He seemed so big among the small Chinese with their shaved heads.

Talking of heads, Sir Oliver Lodge has a most magnificent leonine head, the sort of wonderful forehead that Sir Hiram Maxim had. How much can be told by looking at a head, by looking at a nose with its dilating nostrils, or by watching people's hands, their shape, their movement, their nervous tension.

Conan Doyle had another fine head; he gave me a message from my father from the other world and often invited me to his séances, but somehow I funk'd them and so never went.

We would, however, be little better than the beasts of the field if we believed in nothing at all. We human beings have been endowed with intellect, with a thinking brain that puts us on a higher level than the lower animals. And so it is incumbent on us not only to help ourselves but our fellowmen also and the world generally. A useful and devoted life that has been full of stimulating kindness to others will assuredly reap its reward in the great Hereafter.

* * * * *

But to turn to quite another subject, Lord Allenby had a very large Sudan Stork, which he dearly loved. It had a huge bill, stood about three feet high and was a strong and weird beast.

It used to run about The Residency garden in Cairo, take a peep at the Nile or flop across the lawn, to its master's call.

One day, after luncheon, we were, as usual, having coffee on the verandah.

"Bill, Bill," called the High Commissioner, and Bill accordingly flopped across. But after he had said, "How d'you do" to his master, he looked round and went definitely for poor me and bit deeply into the fatty part of my forearm. It was a hot day and my sleeves were short. Alas, he got me. In went those tremendous bills, and quickly I was bleeding, and day by day became more bruised. Everyone assisted, the deliverer of Palestine, his aides-de-camp, and the guests, and Mr. Stork was in disgrace.

About a week later this wretched stork did exactly the same thing to Lady Allenby, noted for her sweet face and wondrous charm. That was too much it was then decided, and so Mr. Stork was accordingly escorted to the Zoological Gardens outside Cairo. Time rolled on. Lord Allenby left his post, but two years afterwards went back to Palestine to open the War Cemeteries.

I met him on his return.

"By the bye, I saw your friend the stork in the Zoo at Cairo."

"I thought you had only twenty-four hours in Cairo."

"So I had. But I got up early, motored out to the Zoo at seven o'clock, got one of the keepers to take me to his pen and no sooner had I called 'Bill, Bill' than your friend came flopping across to rub his bill upon my hand (and not biting my arm), delighted to see his old master after two years' absence."

But when the Field Marshal went back a couple of years later Bill was dead.

It was amusing one spring day in 1929 to read of the progress of the British Beet Sugar Industry. It reminded me of a conversation I had had one evening during the War with one of the great leaders of sugar production. He was given his baronetcy for the work he did in the Sugar Control during the War, and that particular evening I said, "Why don't we grow Beet Sugar in England? Other countries with climates like ours grow it."

"We have tried it in a small way, but I do not believe that Beet Sugar in England will ever be a paying proposition."

How wrong he was is shown by the fact that there are now over 200,000 acres under sugar beet in England and every year sees the farmers getting an increased amount of sugar extraction from the beetroot. The taxpayer gives £15,000,000.

I wonder how many people realize in these days, when we hear so much about agricultural depression, that we have sugar factories in our midst with an invested capital of £8,000,000, and that during the past five years 5,000,000 tons of sugar have been made by the farmers and that £13,000,000 has been paid out, including cost of transport. But in spite of these big figures the total amount of sugar raised in England is no more than a six weeks' supply for the sugar consumption of the country.

It only needs the initiative of a master mind to do what Napoleon did when he created the sugar beet industry which is now such a success in France. Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George, will you please note this.

* * * * *

It really is delightful the way the people tumble in from anywhere and everywhere to my At Homes. With the snow all glistening over St. James's Park in January, 1929, I walked Sir Douglas Mawson. I had not seen him since before the War, for although he had been in England once since, I was at that time in China. He is an impressive-looking person. He must be at least six feet two inches in height, very straight and thin and upstanding, and he has most wonderful grey eyes. They are quite unusually grey eyes, with dark rims, and although he is an Australian, he does not talk with the Australian accent, perhaps because he is a Professor of Science of the University

of Adelaide. Ever since my journeys in Iceland and Finland I have had a special interest in Arctic and Antarctic exploration. Dr. Nansen, the Arctic explorer, was a very old friend of mine. When Dr. Nansen first came to England I introduced him to London Society and it was at my house that he had his farewell dinner before he left England on his voyage of discovery to the North Pole.* Nansen's evolution was strange from the shy, impetuous young man when I first knew him going off to Greenland. Popular with everyone, a Liberal in politics like most Norwegians, frightened of society and women, happily married to a well-known singer. The contrast with the Nansen I saw last at Geneva when I was there with my son in 1922 was remarkable.

Grey-haired and weather-beaten. Hard lines in his face, overbearing in manner, no longer afraid of women at whose feet he had sat for years. With Soviet sympathies. He was not popular, probably for that reason, although everyone respected his Arctic discoveries and adventures. What a change in a man in thirty-five years. I never knew a greater contrast than between youth and age.

* * * * *

Two other men of grit and character, of determination and adventure were Captain Robert Scott, who planted the Union Jack at the Antarctic in 1912, and Sir Ernest Shackleton whose bronze statue was unveiled outside the Royal Geographical Society's fine building in 1932. How sad that both these men lost their lives for their life's work. And yet they would hardly have had it otherwise. Doubtless each would have preferred to face the ice floes again, to drive their dog teams to greater lengths, to have accomplished still more.

I knew them both; not, alas, intimately, but enough to admire their modesty and enthusiasm and their courage.

* * * * *

Few men have struck me as really great. Many have been born great or become great, but few have innate greatness inside them. Diaz of Mexico was one. Chang Tzo Lin, the War Lord of China, was another. So were Sir William Ramsay and Sir Wilfred Laurier. The mystery man of Europe, Sir Basil Zaharoff, is another.

I met Zaharoff first at Monte Carlo in 1922, a small, dapper, grey-haired little gentleman walking with a stick. One was at once struck with his marvellous eyes. Grey, piercing, kindly,

* A Winter Jaunt to Norway.

thoughtful eyes were his outstanding feature. I feel the mouth is generally the most representative feature, followed by the hands ; but in his case it was the eyes. Much has been written around the "Mystery Man of Europe", but he is very human at the same time as very thoughtful and very strong. He speaks many languages and speaks them all well. Lunching with him at Monte Carlo or Paris, as I have often had the pleasure of doing, he has turned from one language to another with rapidity according to the diplomat or financier he was addressing. His wife, the charming and beautiful Duchesse de Villa Franca, was almost as gifted. While she trifled with her simple diet she played the rôle of hostess to perfection, and those luncheons in the public dining-room were a great feature of Monte Carlo.

Afterwards we would go upstairs to their private flat overlooking the Mediterranean, a flat they used every winter for years. On one of these occasions the Duchess admired a piece of old jewellery I was wearing. "I have something that will go with that," she said. "I'll fetch it."

In a moment she returned with a delightful old pinchbeck French buckle. "That will do for your hat. Please accept it with my love." I often wear it. The donor is, alas, dead, but her memory remains. She died almost the same time my elder son was killed in 1926, and when I was in Paris for my Picture Show poor Zaharoff was disconsolate. We lunched together *à deux* in his lovely house in Avenue Hoche, but the light had gone out of his life. His chivalry and courtesy to her had always struck me as so lovely, and now he was alone. We said little. We understood. He was ill for months. And then he made some huge effort—as I had done—and the old fighting Zaharoff returned to guide the hands of finance and take his place again among the leaders of men.

Here is a letter he wrote to me in February, 1931, in response to a note of consolation I had sent him in his "illness" as reported in the Press. I had seen reports of his "serious illness" several times, so wrote, "Be quick and get well so that we may have a chat in Paris in April."

Hotel de Paris,
Monte Carlo.

"Ma chère Amie,

"No, I have not been ill though the newspapers insist upon such being the case, and also upon my death, but do not believe the latter event until I inform you myself of same.

"I shall be delighted to have you to luncheon or dinner when you are in Paris in April, and we can talk over the past.

"Meanwhile, trusting you are in every way contented,

"I am, *ma chère amie*,

"Always yours cordially,

"BASIL ZAHAROFF."

Surely no one ever wrote a more extraordinary hand than Sir Basil Zaharoff. It is a strange name, but it is stranger still as a signature made with a badly-blunted or badly-cut quill pen and sprawled large and queer across a sheet of paper. The only thing that signature resembles is the work of a matchstick put in an inkpot and then pushed up and down over the paper until it sprawls out for about three inches. Handwriting denotes character—well, this handwriting is so amazing no one else in the world can have such a complex character as the mystery man of Europe. The only signature I know like it is Dr. Brüning of Germany.

I never choose my friends for their politics, religion, titles or their wealth, but always for their brains or their charm.

In one of my letters from Sir Basil in connection with Marshal Foch opening my big Paris exhibition, he says: "I quite agree with what you say about Marshal Foch, whose equal does not exist on earth." This was an interesting remark of one great man about another. . . .

In these rambling recollections I remember one night there was a wonderful reception at Canada House in Trafalgar Square, 1931, where the newly-arrived High Commissioner Fergusson, who has been so successful in London, was giving a party for Lord and Lady Bessborough. Lord Bessborough was leaving in two days to fill Lord Willingdon's place as Governor of Canada.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the party was the purple and white lilac and scarlet tulips. The flowers were gorgeous and it was only the end of March. There is no better place for a party in London than Canada House, once a famous club. It has fine large rooms and an imposing staircase, and is well placed at the corner of Trafalgar Square. Our only regret was the absence of that great Patriot, Mr. Bennet.

There was dancing—there is dancing everywhere nowadays and enjoyed more by the old than the young. I intend to

of King Fuad of Egypt on the marble staircase in Bute House.

"Low's caricatures of you are excellent," I said. "I see the funny little point on your nose. Low found it for me. But I do not see that swan-like neck he gives you. Where is it?"

"We politicians are given cigars, or collars, or hats or noses, or necks, and by them we are numbered," he laughed.

"You're doing too much, my friend," I said, noticing he looked tired. "The law-courts all day and the House all night is too much for anyone."

"It is at the moment, yes—perhaps. But, you see, sleep saves me."

"Lucky dog," I exclaimed.

"I can always sleep," he said. "Sleep like a baby or the pure in heart."

"The most wonderful sleeper I ever knew," I returned, "was Lord Cowdray—then Weetman Pearson. He had £11,000,000 of contracts in Mexico in 1904 when I crossed the Isthmus with him and twenty-two other men. He worked in tropical heat for sixteen or eighteen hours a day and nearly wore out all his engineers with his perpetual questions and amazing memory, till one said pathetically to me, 'For God's sake talk to the boss for half an hour after lunch and let us get a bit of rest.' 'All right, I will.' So after lunch I said, 'I think you ought to talk to me over your coffee with that huge cigar for half an hour.'"

"'All right. A quarter of an hour's talk for you and a quarter of an hour's sleep for me,' he said. We talked. He looked at his watch. 'Now it's my turn,' he laughed, and lay himself down in the railway car, and was sound asleep in one minute. I was to wake him in fifteen minutes, but in fourteen minutes and a half he woke himself."

"That's just what I've trained myself to do," remarked Sir John. "I come out of Court at 4.5 and have Chamber work at 4.30. Out of wig and gown, wash my face and hands in cold water, lie down and sleep for twenty minutes. New man and begin again."

"And at night?"

"Where I lay my head, there my head is found in the morning with no creases anywhere else on the pillow."

"Lucky dog. Thrice lucky dog."

Then the conversation moved to politics. "Hurry up, please, and join the Conservative Party."

"You'll see a letter from me in the press to-morrow. Read it, and let me know what you think about it."

I did—and here is what I wrote him.

To Sir John Simon, March 26th, 1931, after a chat at the Egyptian Legation the night before :

"An excellent letter, but it does not go nearly far enough. Please get over the last water-jump before vials of wrath descend upon us all . . .

"Mark the 1st of May for my moon,* please, unless we have a general election before then?"

The election didn't come for five months, and then he became Foreign Secretary in the National Government.

Speaking of de Laszlo, the most decorated artist in Europe, when King Fuad saw his portrait he said, "Very fine, I would like a dozen please."

Evidently he was thinking of the Royal portraits of two hundred years ago.

* One of my "Moonlight" parties, about which more anon.

CHAPTER VII

AULD LANG SYNE

The late W. S. Gilbert—Memories of Grim's Dyke, Harrow—The Gilbert & Sullivan collaboration—Lady Tree—Sir William Bragg—Alfred Mond—T. P. O'Connor—A woman's tribute—Shooting Parties—Lord Pirrie and Lord Aberconway—Harry Furniss and his sketches—Sir Richard Cruise and the picture—an appreciation—Proffered hospitality—Edison's five-hour night—Admiral Sims writes a poem about me—The Aga Khan—The tribute of Richard Whiteing and Genevieve Ward—Sir William Crookes—Radium discovers an artificial diamond—Sir William Ramsay and the Electric Fuse—Lord Meath and the eggs.

THE late Sir William S. Gilbert was a dear and valued friend of mine for many years. One of the most brilliant companions I ever knew when he chose, and one of the dullest when something had put him out. He talked as wittily as he wrote, and many of his letters to me are teeming with quaint pleasantries and sketches in ink. He was a perennial boy.

So few people are as interesting as their work—they reserve their talents for their books. W. S. Gilbert was an exception—he was as amusing as his “Bab Ballads”.

When, in 1904, Gilbert issued the sixth edition of his “Bab Ballads” (the precursor of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan operas), he appended this grave confession :

“I’ve come to the conclusion that my mine of jocular-
ity in present Anno Domini is worked completely out.

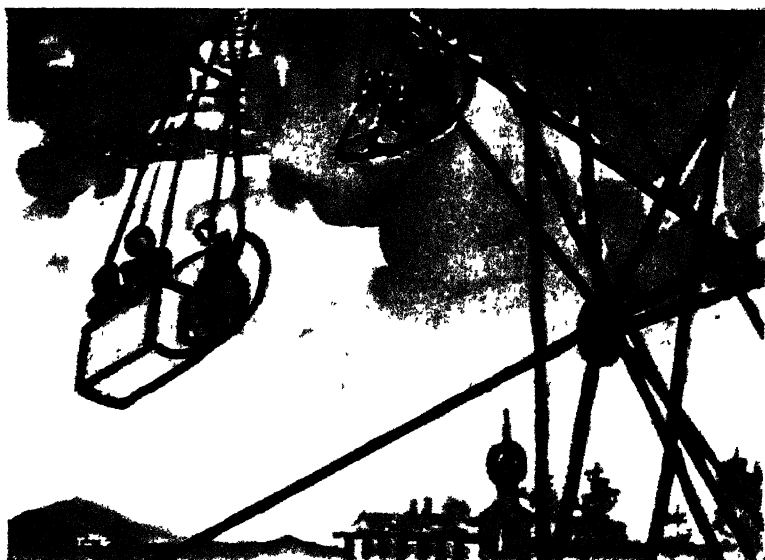
Though the notion you may scout,

I can prove beyond a doubt

That my mine of jocular-ity is utterly worked out.”

As a matter of plain fact, his jocular-ity was anything but worked out. It never could be, except in the grave, which claimed him so unexpectedly in the summer of 1911, at the age of seventy-five. When a knighthood was conferred upon him in 1907 he took the matter characteristically. We met at Harrow where I had gone to see Leslie on Speech Day, when his title was barely a week old. Shaking him warmly by the hand, I said :

“What on earth are we to call you ? ‘W. S. Gilbert’ has been



Two Sketches in Czechoslovakia.
A Symmetry in Iron.

heard from end to end of the world for so long that it seems impossible to think of you by any other name. In fact, I hardly know what the 'W' stands for."

"Neither do I," he replied. "I believe I once heard my parents say that they christened me 'William.' "

"Does anybody call you that?" I asked.

"Not a soul, not even my wife."

"Then what am I to do?"

"Call me 'Bill.' "

"All right, I shall," I rejoined, "and as we are now standing in 'Bill Yard' (Roll Call), nothing could be more appropriate. So herewith let me christen you 'Sir Bill.' "

"I will do the billing if you will do the cooing," he laughed.

And although I did not call him "Bill", he, at any rate, chaffingly signed himself so when he wrote to me from then onwards.

All that good taste and money could do to make a beautiful house (standing nearly five hundred feet above the sea) still more beautiful was done at the Gilberts' home, Grim's Dyke, Harrow Weald, and as one drove up and saw the dear old English home with its dull red tiles and diamond-paned windows, almost buried in creepers, it seemed hard to accept its old-world appearance as the product of 1877, so effective had been the skill of Norman Shaw, the architect. Many and many happy week-ends the writer spent with the kindly hosts of Harrow Weald, where Mrs. Gilbert was a delightful chatelaine.

Many people called Gilbert conceited, and no doubt he was, but most of his conceited remarks were uttered in a spirit of fun. He would tell you unblushingly that he was the most beautiful person in the world, that his forty-eight inch waist was exactly correct for a man of sixty, that his weight was that of Apollo (not in marble), that his life had been faultless like a clean and beautiful crystal, and he never ceased to impress upon you the talent and genius of W. S. Gilbert and the incompetence of everyone else; but it was all done with a grave face and hidden laughter. Once chatting pleasantly in the billiard-room, he explained that some of his operatic verses were rattled off and never corrected, but others were pondered over for hours, aye, almost weeks. When he had completed the work, he handed it over to Sir Arthur Sullivan, who then wrote the music.

"But I don't see how you can write a chorus," I said.

"Perfectly easy," he rejoined, "and in my original notes I always write all the choruses."

"You must be a very difficult person to work with," I ventured once to remark, and he was angry, positively angry. I had touched a wrong note.

"No," he said furiously, "I am not. And what is more, I never had a theatrical row with Sullivan. I realize that collaboration must be one continual give-and-take, and the only way to work with a man is to believe that his share is of more importance than your own, and, therefore, give in as gracefully as you can to all his suggestions. I have altered whole lines to please Sullivan many a time, and I must say he has cheerfully changed entire passages to please me.

"Sullivan chose tenors, basses, baritones and contraltos for their vocal qualities, and would pass them on to me to decide. If we both agreed, D'Oyly Carte had instructions to make the engagement. Merely acting parts I choose myself. My royalties for the Savoy librettos for ten years were three thousand pounds a year. Sullivan received his own royalties on his own music. The output was about a million and a half copies. But I shall never work any more; I am sixty, my days are numbered, and the few years or months that are left to me I hope to enjoy with the aid of my friends."

If his days were truly numbered, the number was a big one, for it was fifteen years before his tragic death took place, by drowning in his own beautiful flower-decked pond—hale and hearty still. As a matter of fact, he did work again, for he subsequently produced more than one new play.

He rattled off his quick repartees incessantly—they poured forth as from a Maxim gun—but I seldom remembered the smart things he said. Here is one, however. As we were admiring the beautiful paint-like bloom in his peach house, some remark was made about the likeness of a peach to an actress's complexion.

"They often paint, but they do not always draw," he said, without a moment's hesitation.

Reminding him of the fact that he had been so desperately ill in 1900, when I started for Mexico the first time, that I had never expected to see him again, but that ten years later he was flourishing and fitter than ever, he replied:

"You see, I had gout all my life till 1900, when rheumatic arthritis came along. They eloped together. The only scandal I ever had in the family."

He once asked what one of my boys was going to be.

"He is going into medicine," I replied.

"I don't mind his going into medicine as long as his medicine doesn't go into me," he remarked like a flash.

Again—walking round his gardens at Grim's Dyke—I asked how many gardeners he kept.

"Eleven and a half, and an odd man thrown in—or nearly a baker's dozen."

"Are you not very proud of having acquired all this out of your own brain?"

"Not at all, it represents the folly of the British public," with a twinkle.

Gilbert told some funny stories of his own plays. By nature he was unquestionably quick-tempered, but long schooling, he declared, had taught him to be a perfect saint at rehearsals.

"I go over the same lines again and again," he said, "because I will have my performers render them as I wish; but I find the only way to get them to do so is to pat them on the back and become on friendly terms with them. Flying into a rage only makes them do less justice to themselves and more injustice than necessary to the piece."

"And how do you enjoy your first nights?" I asked.

"Not at all; I am never in front to see them. With one exception, and that was after it had run a hundred nights, I have never seen any one of my plays performed upon the stage once the rehearsals were over."

"Really?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, it is true." For I saw him rehearsing several times after that. "I superintend every costume, every scene, everything, in fact, until the hour arrives for the raising of the curtain upon the first performance, and by that time I depart, only returning to the theatre about eleven to make a bow if necessary and to hear the result. What I suffer during those intervening hours no man can tell. I have spent them at the Club, I once went to the theatre alone to see a play, I have walked up and down the street—but no matter where I was, agony and apprehension possessed me."

Does anybody really know why that delightful partnership between Gilbert and Sullivan ended?

Well as I knew Gilbert (I must have had dozens of letters from him, some illustrated—they were both sweet and bitter and often lengthy), he never enlarged on that quarrel. What-

ever caused it, they neither of them were ever so successful separately. To me Gilbert always spoke charmingly of Sullivan, with real affection, adding that all partnerships come to an end some day. Even after their first quarrel they produced *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers* and *The Yeomen of the Guard* together.

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From my friendship with W. S. let me turn to my friendship with Lady Tree which is of very long standing. It dates from the time when she was my mentor at Queen's (the first) College for women. I simply adored her, and so did all the girls. She was tall and slim and most attractive with the most lovely voice. She was quite a Greek scholar and a brilliant young woman. After marrying Beerbohm Tree and having three daughters, she started life again and won a place for herself on the stage. That wonderful voice still remains and no one speaks more beautifully on the wireless than Maude Tree. How she used to lecture me on being a naughty little girl. Talking of lectures, one Friday night in March, 1929, I walked across to the lecture given by Sir Ernest Rutherford (President of the Royal Society), at the Royal Institution. He is a cheery soul in spite of all his profound learning, and surely no lecturer was ever more at his ease or less worried or harassed by his position. Evidently there had been some joke between him and my friend, Sir William Bragg, President of the Royal Institution who was sitting nearby, for Sir Ernest, with a smile, made little jests on sound and radium and oxygen, all far beyond me, to which Will Bragg responded by a twinkling in his eyes or a tiny shake of his head.

Going up in the lift afterwards to the Braggs' beautiful flat, Lady Rutherford chanced to go in with me, and to my surprise she said: "For thirty years I have been listening to my husband's lectures and I am still nervous every time."

Fancy that. She didn't look nervous and he certainly appeared to have no nerves about him.

What a treat it is when a man really knows his profound subject and yet can make it fairly clear to an average intelligence. And speaking loud enough to be heard at every corner of the hall and introducing a touch of humour.

Sir William Bragg's children's lectures are a triumph, and one newspaper said they were as popular as the pantomime. Few people know he is also a charming water-colour artist.

But oh, were there ever such *terribly* uncomfortable seats

to sit upon—such racks of veritable torture as those in the Theatre Hall at the Royal Institution? Luckily Faraday had a centenary in 1931 and the whole place was changed and enlarged. The Royal Institution dates from 1799, and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1800 for facilitating inventions and scientific discoveries. Sir Humphrey Davey, the inventor of the safety-lamp, and Michael Faraday, the eminent chemist, both lectured there.

Sir Henry Dewar was its head for many years and I used constantly to go upstairs to their famous flat where they held a Friday night reception. He was succeeded by Sir William Bragg, one of the most profound scientists of the day and one of the most cheery, jovial, charming, delightful people one could ever wish to meet. I have known Sir William Bragg for most of my life, and his most adorable wife, until her death. . . .

Sir William Bragg's son is following along in the same work as his distinguished father and is already a Fellow of the Royal Society. F.R.S. is a world honour and a distinction coveted by all, one which my father received as quite a young man.

Quite another type of chemist was Alfred Mond.

I used at first to run away from him. He was so stern and so stout, he was rather frightening. How one can misjudge a man.

Then about 1907 I took my dear old mother out to Biarritz with her maid, and at the hotel were Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Mond. More than that, they were at the very next table.

We talked; they were holidaying. Pretty, witty Mrs. Mond and her husband spent much time buying up beautiful things for their new home. Then I found how artistic he was, what a lot he knew of art and poetry and books, and gradually my fear melted, and I liked him. Later his fatness and that stern look of his melted into slimness and a cheery smile as success followed success. No man had broader views. Lord Melchett's death was a national loss. He was a leader of industry with vision and fearlessness. No man did more in twenty years.

Nothing and nobody was allowed to stand in his way. He may have been ruthless but he attained. His death at the close of 1930 was a calamity for our over-taxed, distressed country. He had become a great man. He was one of my guarantors for £500 for my Pageant, so he showed his faith in me.

In 1930 "Albany" gave a centenary celebration Tea Party down its great passage length, with flats bordering either side.

Few of us realize that there is no prefix of "*The*" in front of Albany. In fact, it is considered an execrable crime and blunder to put in that "*The*". Anyway, the queer street of low houses and gardens between Piccadilly and Vigo Street had its centenary in 1930 and "*it*", Albany, gave a party.

Sir Edward Clarke, who was there, was one of my dearest friends. He was a great lawyer and still spruce and young at the age of eighty. In September, 1930, I motored to Staines and found him feeble for the first time. The brilliant brain was less forcible, but the darling old courtier was still there, and he still wore the grey frock coat and side-whiskers. He was just approaching his ninety-first year, or eighty-nine-and-a-half, as he said. "And I just want to sleep, my dear."

Coming back, I could not help reflecting on death and old age. Death is swift, old age is long-drawn-out and terrible. Have you ever noticed how people say: "Poor dear, one cannot wish him to live," or "Life has no longer any charm for her." A polite way of saying you and everyone else wish them to "pass on". Failing sight, toothless gums, hard hearing, the vitality, the strength, the memory and the beauty of the face and skin all gone—cruel and terrible indeed is old age. I dread old age and welcome death.

But those thoughts did not suit the old gentleman I had just left. His eyes were clear, his skin was pink. He failed in nothing. But he repeated, "I want to sleep, I always want to sleep, some day I shall sleep away and I shall be glad."

* * * * *

What a wonderful octogenarian the Right Hon. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., ripened into, a well-liked friend of mine for many years. His power of memory remained keen as ever and his literary output prodigious. He was greatly troubled by rheumatism towards the end of his life, and his powers of locomotion diminished so greatly that, like Lord Rosebery, he could only get about when wheeled in a bath-chair. But the brain retained the freshness of youth. His "*Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian*" are full of interesting references and anecdotes. What a splendid thing to grow old so charmingly and gracefully.

I went to his comfortable flat. I hadn't seen him for some years, as I had been wandering the world around, but found him as bright in mind as ever. Hardly able to walk, and his voice very weak.

His great book had just come out, and he said :

"I've two secretaries, and dictate to each in turn."

I saw him a few weeks before his death in November, 1929, sitting beside the fire in his flat. He was fairly bright and cheerful as we chatted over my recent visit to Prague Fête on the 1,000th year anniversary of their Patron Saint, Good King Wenceslas; his voice was very feeble as it had been for a couple of years, but firm enough to chaff me about never marrying a second time, and again referring to the fact that his heart and all interest in life had died when the foreign lady who lived in the flat opposite his died a few years before.

"My ambition died with *her*. My interest in life died in *her*. And my weekly Sunday letter became more and more irksome and more and more of a curse."

"But you don't want to die."

"I'm not sure. I've always had the greatest horror of death." Therefore I was all the more pleased to hear how he lost consciousness and quietly slipped away after receiving the Pope's blessing and Extreme Unction. T. P. O'Connor's last years were very lonely. He loved people. He loved the world. He loved to be in it, and of it. Tied by the legs and weak, his spirit rebelled. He used to implore me to go and see him, and holding my hands he would say, with trembling voice, "Come again soon."

We were never introduced.

How did I get to know him?

In my early days of struggle, he reviewed a book of mine, covering the whole front page of his Sunday paper. In fact, that page made me. Although a stranger I wrote to thank him. We met. And for thirty years we were friends.

But nothing would bring him to my Devonshire House flat, because of his dread of heights.

I saw T.P. at the Royal Garden Party in July, 1929—just four months before he died. Quite cheerful, and proud at being present. Surrounded by friends, and holding a little Court of his own round his bath-chair. He always loved lime-light. He was forty-nine years in the House, the "Vice-Father" being Lloyd George with thirty-nine years. T.P. was of very humble origin in Ireland. He made thousands a year and never had a penny. He was one of the earliest people to use a typewriter.

Dear T.P. How sympathetic and appreciative he always

was. He once put me and my whole life-story, all too flatteringly, into one of his newspaper nutshells. It is a pleasure to reproduce yet another which appeared in the *Sunday Times*, March 28th, 1926 :

AN ADVENTUROUS LADY

The other day I met for the first time for more than a year Mrs. Alec-Tweedie ; she is not long back from one of those adventurous voyages which seem to be now the speciality of intrepid women. When first I saw Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, she was, I think, one of the most striking beauties of London ; with flashing black eyes, black hair, splendid height ; and I rather expected that she would settle down to the rôle of the beautiful lady. I had an interest in her, apart from her own attractiveness, because I knew her father, a great doctor ; I was an intimate friend of her brother, Vaughan Harley, an even greater doctor than his father ; and her mother, being a Muspratt, was Irish. It was a sad moment in her career, for her husband had just died, leaving her two fine boys—one of whom died in the Great War. Instead of pining or frivolling, Mrs. Tweedie just buckled down to work so as to provide for herself and her children ; and since that period she has led, I think, the most active and most laborious life of any woman of her time.

She took to globe-trotting and book-writing ; I suppose there is scarcely a land of the world she hasn't visited ; intrepid, fearless—of hardships as well as of perils ; and as to books, her volumes would fill the shelves of a library. And now she has broken out in a new place ; she has taken to drawing ; has had great success, culminating in a request for an exhibition of her works in one of the biggest and best galleries in Paris. She is, as has been seen by the papers the first tenant to enter into occupation in the new and splendid flats in the new Devonshire House. The flat is not quite ready, but she thought it a good lark to occupy it for some hours on quarter day ; though some of her guests had to sit on the floor, it was a merry party.

The above refers to a span in my life's journey.

After my husband's death, I let my lovely home in York Terrace for five or ten guineas a week, and for years I had a cottage at 25s. a week at Chalfont St. Giles.

In between weeks of work I enjoyed myself. There were memorable shooting parties before the War. I used to be invited as the "odd woman" when some wife dropped out or some man had no wife. Well I remember wonderful Fridays to Mondays with Lord and Lady Pirrie—he was head of Harland and Wolff, the great shipbuilders of Belfast—at Wilton Park. And with Lord Aberconway at Bodmans in North Wales, made famous by Lady Aberconway's wonderful garden. And at Sir Thomas and lovely Lady Sutherland's at Coldharbour at Liss in Hampshire. Sir Thomas practically made the P. & O. and was its chairman for twenty or thirty years. I once christened a P. & O. steamer and received a diamond brooch as a reward for doing so. Sir Thomas was succeeded by Lord Inchcape, with whom and his wife I yachted near Arran and enjoyed a shoot in Norfolk. And again Lord Devonport, the Head of the Port of London. It was a

small circle composed of heads of huge businesses and among others, Prince d'Arenberg and Charles de Lesseps, both Presidents of the Suez Canal.

Walter Runciman and Reginald McKenna were also among the guests. (How far both these men have gone since those days. In fact Walter Runciman is becoming a great statesman with his Tariff plans.)

Of course these great heads of industry discussed their jobs. The laying down of the *Mauretania* and other huge Atlantic liners, new railways, new docks, new ships for the East. Historic week-ends, tempered by shoots and chats as a little diversion. What tens of thousands of men—I might almost say millions—were controlled and guided by the brains at those shooting parties. And what dear, delightful, kindly human beings they all were. Some shot well and some badly, but they one and all enjoyed themselves, and were as keen as mustard both over their work and their play. They were big brains, and they were all great workers.

We women walked out to lunch with the guns. Personally I often followed them in the afternoon. Anyway, we had very jolly times. How gorgeous the woods looked in these winter days. The earth brown and golden with leaves and bracken, the pale blue and heliotrope mists, the dark and yet fairy-like branches of the trees. The early winter sunsets. Is any land more beautiful than Brilliant Britain?

* * * * *

Harry Furniss, the famous draughtsman and cartoonist, was another friend of mine of very many years' standing and I have a number of sketches (mostly humorous) that he did of me at different times. The distinguishing quality about Harry was his enormous capacity for work.

He died on January 13th, 1925. Only fourteen days before I had received a long letter from him telling me that he had been laid up for a year, a martyr to neuritis.

Hastings.

December 31st, 1924.

"Dear Mrs. Alec,

"Just a line to wish you everything that is nice for the New Year. I believe you have been back in London for some time, and I should have called to see you. I am like a horse in blinkers, unable to see anything except

directly in front of me, and therefore cannot get about unaided. Luckily what I can see is as clear as ever. I can, as you see, write and read and draw, so I ought to feel grateful.

"Now what about yourself? I expect you are somewhere (and here comes an amusing sketch). . . .

"under all this, working with both hands.

"With kindest regards and best wishes,

"Ever yours, H.F."

At the end of his letter was a little sketch, which showed that the spirit of fun was with him to the last.

* * * * *

Speaking about eyes; a famous merchant called one day on Sir Richard Cruise, the King's oculist.

"Focus your eyes on that picture," said the surgeon, "focus your eyes on that engraving, please."

"Does everyone have to look at that picture?"

"Yes."

"Dash it all, if I give you a picture—a real fine modern picture of my store—will you take that old engraving down?"

Collapse of Sir Richard.

* * * * *

Apropos of nothing, why do so many old men marry young wives? They are nearly always dead in a year if they do. Nature rebels. The old gentleman tries to be young and to keep pace and falls out by the way, but in most cases the girl married him for gain, so she doesn't mind. Poor, foolish old gentleman. He flatters himself the girl—his cook, his nurse, or his secretary—is in love with him. He blinds himself to the fact that the young woman is in love with the idea of no more work, lots of play, lots of money and real freedom. In a twelvemonth or less a couple of nurses have to tend the old gentleman to the last stage of his worthy but matrimonially mistaken career. Several old gentlemen have confessed to me, "I ought never to have married again. It has brought misery to everyone—misery to my children and their children, discontent to my young wife now there are no more fur coats to buy, and certainly anything but peace or contentment to me. No, no, I certainly ought never to have married again."

Old gentlemen, beware.

* * * * *

"I like being deaf," Edison once told me, with a wink of his eye.

"Do you?"

"Yes. You see, it saves my having to answer such a lot of foolish questions and I look stupid, so they leave me alone."

"And you are a devil for work?" He winked.

"Four or five hours of sleep is enough for me. You see, I never take any exercise. So that part of my human machinery doesn't get tired or worn out and leaves more energy for the top storey." I thought him a funny old man in 1912 and in 1929 he was still going strong and having his eighty-second birthday. In September, 1931, he was dead and a nation was in mourning.

* * * * *

Another old friend and a great man of U.S.A. is Admiral Sims. He was the American Admiral who did so much in the War. He was my host at Newport, in the early days of that awful earthquake in Japan when I had nowhere to go, waiting with my ticket for Japan in my hand.

The following shows his spurt of fun :

Newport, R. I.

September 18th, 1923.

"There was once a fair lady named Tweedie
Who has guessed that for books I am greedy ;
So she sends me her 'isms,*
That are brilliant as prisms,
Knowing well of such thoughts I am needy."

If you don't like that, try this one.

"There was a fine lady named Alec
Who writes books that are plainly cephalic,
For they sure ease the head
And they stand in good stead
Even those who are least didascallic.

"Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) WM. F. SIMS,

Admiral."

I must tender my great appreciation of American Women's Clubs who have entertained me royally all over the States during my many visits, and more especially to that delightful Colony Club of New York where I enjoyed so much hospitality as an

* I wrote a little birthday book called *Tweedieisms*.

Honorary Member when writing "America as I Saw It" for the *New York Times*.

* * * * *

Let us jump from The States to an Indian potentate.

I saw His Highness the Aga Khan in the midst of the Round Table Conference of October, 1931. It was at the Birthday Party of King Fuad of Egypt—a wonderful party, as is always the case at the Egyptian Legation. The Aga Khan had a most magnificent "something" on his head. He seldom wears his turban, although he is the religious head of a Mohammedan party, but that night he had a sort of inverted dark muff on the top of his grey hair, all silky and very high—if one dared, one would call it a conical tea-cosy.

His coat was magnificent, the most gorgeous red and yellow silk, and with that extraordinary gift of recognition for which he is famous, he passed me in the hall with a cheery, "Hullo, Mrs. Tweedie, how are you?"

It must be nearly six years since he and I travelled home from India when he had "drowned all his clothes", as he amusingly put it, by the capsizing of a launch which was bringing them from the other side of the bay to the ship in Bombay. What a ragamuffin he looked, this fabulously rich and important personage, all the way home with a pair of white flannel trousers, a very shabby coat and a still more appalling top coat which had lost its buttons, which someone had lent him. But in this weird attire this great Indian gentleman, ruler of a large sect of Mohammedans, travelled and smiled for ten days as far as Marseilles, where his Rolls-Royce and valet met him.

But at the Egyptian Legation that evening in 1931 he was gorgeous, for he had just been dining at Buckingham Palace with the King. The Aga Khan speaks perfect English, absolutely perfect, and yet in November, 1931, when he broadcast a most excellent address in London, an accent was quite perceptible. Probably from nervousness.

His Highness has hundreds of thousands of religious followers. In the War he persuaded millions to help the old country even after the entry of Turkey on the German side. Every sportsman knows his interest in the Turf—only last year he won both the Derby and the Cesarewitch. What more could a sportsman want? . . .

* * * * *

Richard Whiteing, the famous author of "John Street"

helped the great actress Dame Genevieve Ward, who was American born, to write her life.

A truly remarkable book, by a truly remarkable couple. And in it they said nice things about me.

Richard Whiteing was leader-writer for the *Manchester Guardian* for thirty or forty years, and only wrote his first novel, "No. 5, John Street", when he was sixty.

Genevieve Ward was one of the most virile women I ever knew. She was so intensely alive. She throbbed with vitality. In her late years, as I knew her, she seldom read a book and yet she knew something about everything.

She was passionate. Passionate in her love and hate. She cooed the prettiest love words to those she cared for, and they were many, and she hissed fire of hate at those she disliked.

A dangerous woman? No, it was only her way. Her speech was often strangely apt, the utterance of a quick brain and subtle mind. A great woman. Aye, a great and a lovable character.

While still on the aged let us turn to Sir William Crookes, mentioned in the last chapter, who until he was quite old, looked more like the Colonel of a smart regiment than a deeply erudite scientist. But for the "Crookes tube" which he invented, Röntgen Rays would never have been discovered, and but for the Röntgen Rays much human suffering would never have been alleviated. It is probably the "Crookes tube" that made his name known to the larger public, although his important work in explosives, radium, and other matters is of world-wide repute. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this hard-working man was his love of society, and withal his capacity for enjoyment. In his handsome home at Notting Hill, where I have taken part in so many delightful parties since my hair was in two pigtails, for he was an old friend of my parents, he had a large laboratory, where he spent every half-hour that could be claimed from his busy day. Committee meetings, Analytical Boards, Explosives Commissions, and goodness knows what, all occupied his time; but if he had half-an-hour before dinner or an hour or two before bedtime, he would trot off to his famous "lab", where so much excellent work was done. When dear old Lady Crookes died she left me a piece of jewellery, just as Lady Erickhsen had done. How sweet of them.

To say that Sir William Crookes had dined out most nights for years and years is literally true, and on the nights he had not dined out he had entertained at home.

One evening at dinner, sometime early in this century, soon after radium had been discovered, Sir William Crookes took his guests after a dinner party up to his "lab" to see the effect of the light from this new substance.

Having arrived upstairs, he asked "Are you ready?" and suddenly switched off the electric light. There we stood in the darkness, until he unpacked from a black calico wrap a piece of something which shone like a glow-worm. Gradually our eyes became accustomed to the situation, and we noticed that it was quite possible to see faintly by the light of this clear spark. It was radium, then practically unknown.

"Now," said the Professor, "if someone will bring a diamond ring and put it near the light you will be able quite distinctly to count the stones and see their size." This someone did. Then lifting up the spark he held it in front of a lady. Upon her neck we saw distinctly her diamond necklace, every stone showing quite clearly and plainly, sparkling in the rays; but the pendant appeared to have a hole in the middle of it. There were diamonds surrounding it and then a great big square hole.

"Good heavens," exclaimed her husband, "my dear, you have lost your emerald. Every diamond is visible, but the emerald is gone." A little shriek from the lady.

"My wife has lost the emerald from her pendant," explained the agonized husband. "Look, there is a hole where it ought to be."

The poor distraught lady was fumbling meantime to get hold of the precious pendant to see what was the matter, but before she had time to unfasten the necklace, Sir William exclaimed:

"Oh, it's all right; the stone is there. Emeralds, rubies and sapphires do not reflect the light from radium. There is no hole in the pendant; it is simply the blackness caused by the want of illumination."

A sigh of relief came from the owner, who thought she had lost one of the most treasured of her possessions, and then Sir William told a little story of how in his laboratory another lady had by this means discovered that one of the diamonds in her necklace was a sham. The whole circlet shone in the light until it came to this one spot. There only a blank space appeared. The necklet had been mended in Paris a few months before at a shop they knew only as *voyageurs*, and they finally concluded that the real diamond had been taken out and a false gem substituted. Radium had exposed the fraud.

In the matter of dining out Sir William Ramsay ran him close, and Sir Rufus Isaacs, later Lord Reading, another hard-working man of my acquaintance, was not a bad third. They all said it was relaxation, that they must dine somewhere, and that they enjoyed the meal more in company with other people.

* * * * *

Peeping backwards think of the millions of lives saved from premature death by the British discovery of smallpox vaccine by Jenner ; by the system of antiseptic surgery worked out after persistent study by Lister ; by the work of Mawson, Ross, Simpson and Bruce in finding the cause of Malaria and the way to prevent it ; by James Simpson in the application of chloroform and the freedom from pain it brought about. And then in recent times look at the great life-saving properties of Sir Almroth Wright's anti-typhoid vaccine and the invention of Insulin by Dr. Banting for the treatment of Diabetes.

These are but a few medical items. When we come to more general inventions, one thinks of Roger Bacon, who as long ago as 1250 invented magnifying-glasses and the first pair of spectacles ; James Watt with his steam-engine and George Stephenson, who first made railway locomotion possible ; Arkwright with his spinning-machine and Sir Charles Wheatstone with his marvellous system of electric telegraphy by which 500 words a minute could be sent over one wire.

And then we come to men like Graham Bell of Edinburgh, who invented the telephone and photophone, and Brennan with his gyroscopic compass, and great scientists like Lord Kelvin, who laid the first Atlantic cable (helped by Sir John Pender) and whose fame became so world-wide from the immense number of his inventions that Queen Victoria conferred on him a peerage. The discovery of a cheap and quick way of making iron into steel was made by Sir Henry Bessemer, an Englishman born in Hertfordshire. It was in the electricity researches of Sir Humphrey Davy that the way was paved to the discovery of electric light, and to him also the miners of the world owe a debt of gratitude for his safety lamp. In the domain of science Sir William Crookes and his famous tubes stand pre-eminent. Though up to the time of the War the Germans were the leading makers of chemical dyes, it was to the English chemist Michael Faraday that they owed the discovery of liquefaction of gases and benzine, the foundation of the manufacture of dyes.

This is a fascinating subject to pursue and the list could be indefinitely prolonged. Perhaps some of my readers who devote so much time to the solving of crossword puzzles might care to transfer their energies to the making of a more detailed list. It would show how much the world is indebted to Great Britain for so many life-ameliorating and life-saving inventions—the products of Anglo-Saxon brains.

It would be too difficult for me to assign any reason for all this evidence of mental activity—but there it is. Facts speak for themselves. In England there is ample opportunity for everyone who is a hard worker and has brains to reach the top. It does not matter in the least how humbly a man or woman is born. While the public schools have given us many outstanding leaders of men in political, financial and commercial concerns, when it comes to Captains of Industry the majority may be said to have sprung from the bottom of the ladder and to have forced their way to the top by sheer innate ability and the infinite capacity for taking pains.

Every child born healthy has its chance. The chance is always there. It is the pluck to seize the luck that is so often wanting. But we must not breed degenerates.

I won't give in to the people of the United States when they describe their land as "God's own country". It is an incorrect boast, at any rate as far as Great Britain is concerned. The United States may be a go-ahead and splendidly prosperous country, but, although we did not discover it, yet we colonized it, gave it our language and started it going. American blood owes most of its virility to the Anglo-Saxon.

So let us be proud of this Brilliant Britain of ours, proud of its beauty and its equable climate, proud of its people and of all they have done; proud also of the wonderful British Empire on which the sun never sets and whose flag flies over myriad masses of comparatively contented humanity. Remember there is nothing a British workman cannot do when he sets his mind to it, and nothing a British woman cannot do when she gets the chance.

* * * * *

Here I shall hark back again to days long past. I am reminded of an incident which gave a great scientist an opportunity of displaying the practical side of his attainments. Just before dinner one February night in 1907, I was expecting friends; but when turning on the drawing-room lights, a fuse went ~~and half~~ of the lamps were extinguished.

It was an awkward moment. I telephoned to the electrician, who could only send a boy. Visitors arrived, and my agitation was becoming rather serious, for the fuse refused to be adjusted, when Sir William and Lady Ramsay were announced.

I rushed at the former.

"Can you put in an electric fuse?" I asked.

"Certainly," was the reply.

"For Heaven's sake, go down to the kitchen," I continued. "There is a hopeless boy there who evidently cannot manage it, and we are in comparative darkness."

Down the steps the great chemist bounded, followed by the parlourmaid, and landed, much to the surprise of everybody, at the kitchen door. There seemed to be barely time for him to have reached the electric box before the light sprang into being. Then he washed his hands and came to dinner, smiling. What a contrast to the fumbling of the workman was the dexterity of the scientific man.

Two evenings later, Sir Joseph Swan, the co-inventor of the incandescent burner, known as "Ediswan", was dining at my house and I told him the story.

"I have no doubt Ramsay had often done it before," he said, "for when electric light first came in I never seemed to go to any house that I wasn't asked to attend to the light. In fact, I quite looked upon it as part of the evening's entertainment to put things in order before the proceedings began. But I think *you* have inherited your father's gift as a *raconteur*, and that is paying you a high compliment, for he was one of the best I ever knew. Only the other day I was retailing some of his stories about Ruskin." And then he reminded me of the following :

Ruskin and my father were great friends, and several times the latter stayed at Brantwood. On his first visit he had been touring in the English Lakes, and having a delightful invitation from Ruskin, he gladly accepted; but there was no mention of my mother, and consequently, rather than suggest that she should join him, it was arranged that she and my small sister—then about eight—should go to the neighbouring hotel.

That night Ruskin asked my father whether he liked tea or coffee before he got up.

"A cup of tea," he replied.

"Why don't you choose coffee?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I have lived so much abroad that I don't fancy English coffee—it is generally so badly made."

His host said nothing. The next morning my father was awakened and a strong smell of coffee permeated the room, and turning to the servant, he asked, "Is that my cup of tea?"

"No, sir, it is Mr. Ruskin's coffee."

"Mr. Ruskin's coffee. What do you mean?"

"The master was up early, he roasted the coffee himself, he ground the coffee himself, and he made the coffee himself, and he hopes you will like it." England still lives and a fine younger generation is knocking at the door.

* * * * *

After the great crisis in 1931, the President of the Royal College of Surgeons spoke up for England. After a few tariffs had been put on (we having been the only Free Trade fools in the world up to now), half the world squeaked because they could no longer dump. France squeaked the worst of all. Here is what Lord Moynihan said in a letter printed in *The Times* on December 8th, 1931:

HAS FRANCE FORGOTTEN?

To the Editor of The Times.

Sir,

Our entry into the War saved France from extinction. When her troops mutinied we held the line. We compounded her war debt to us by a funding agreement in such manner as to remit two-thirds of that debt of £600,000,000.

When the franc dropped to one-tenth of its former value, we suggested no tariff changes such as she now proposes (and in the case of coal has already made) because sterling has lost one-third of its value in her currency.

During the War France raised in this country loans of over £50,000,000. Everyone believed these loans to be based upon a value of, approximately, 25 francs to the pound. France has, in effect, repudiated four-fifths of her debt to us, in respect both of capital and of interest, by depreciating the franc to a value of 2d. Yet France receives payment on her Brazilian and Serbian bonds at a franc value of 10d.

Has France forgotten?

Your obedient servant,

MOYNIHAN.

It seemed such an excellent letter that I posted off a line of congratulation early—that same morning. By five in the afternoon the following arrived also by post. Four hours each way. Can any other postal service in the world be as expeditious?

11, Portland Place,

"Dear Mrs. Alec-Tweedie,

"Praise from you rejoices my heart. Thank you, most warmly.

"Ever yours,

"MOYNIHAN."

* * * * *



Royal Colonial Institute - Empire Day
1922

Lord Meath and Sir Godfrey Lagden at the Royal Empire Dinner.

When I last saw Sir James Crichton-Browne he was sitting at the Royal Institution in a straight-backed chair, a friend of my father, and therefore lifelong friend of mine. He was eighty-eight. His white whiskers, like those of Sir Edward Clarke, were well trimmed. They are probably the only trimmed whiskers of the kind left in London. Two remarkable men. And yet a third, for I had been to the Royal Colonial Institute where Lord Meath, the founder of Empire Day, at eighty-four, looking bright and cheery and young, was giving a party for his friends to look at his picture, just painted by Sir William Orpen, as founder of Empire Day, for the National Portrait Gallery (1930).

Orpen had made him look ten years older than his age; but what an excellent head Orpen drew of himself on my famous table cloths.

* * * * *

Lord Meath made me the first woman Fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute (now called Royal Empire Society) and many are the dinners, luncheons and lectures I have enjoyed there.

All dear friends of my childhood; but my very dearest and best has always been, my bed. I simply love and adore my bed. Tired or cross, worn out or weary, my bed, like all the friends I have written about in this chapter, never fails me.

Speaking of Lord Meath reminds me of an experience of the veteran Earl's at one of my luncheon parties some years ago. Was it a comedy or was it a catastrophe? Judge for yourselves. One day in 1913, the enclosed charming note came from the Earl of Meath:

Ottershaw.

"DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

"As you have been kind enough to invite me to lunch with you on Tuesday the 21st, may I be pardoned if I say that I should be grateful if you could, on that occasion, give me a lightly-boiled egg, and some hot milk and coffee, as I never take meat in the middle of the day.

"In anticipation of the pleasure of seeing you on that day at 1.30 p.m., believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"MEATH."

Could anything be more simple than a lightly-boiled egg? So thinking, I explained carefully to the cook that two absolutely fresh-laid eggs straight from the country—for it was

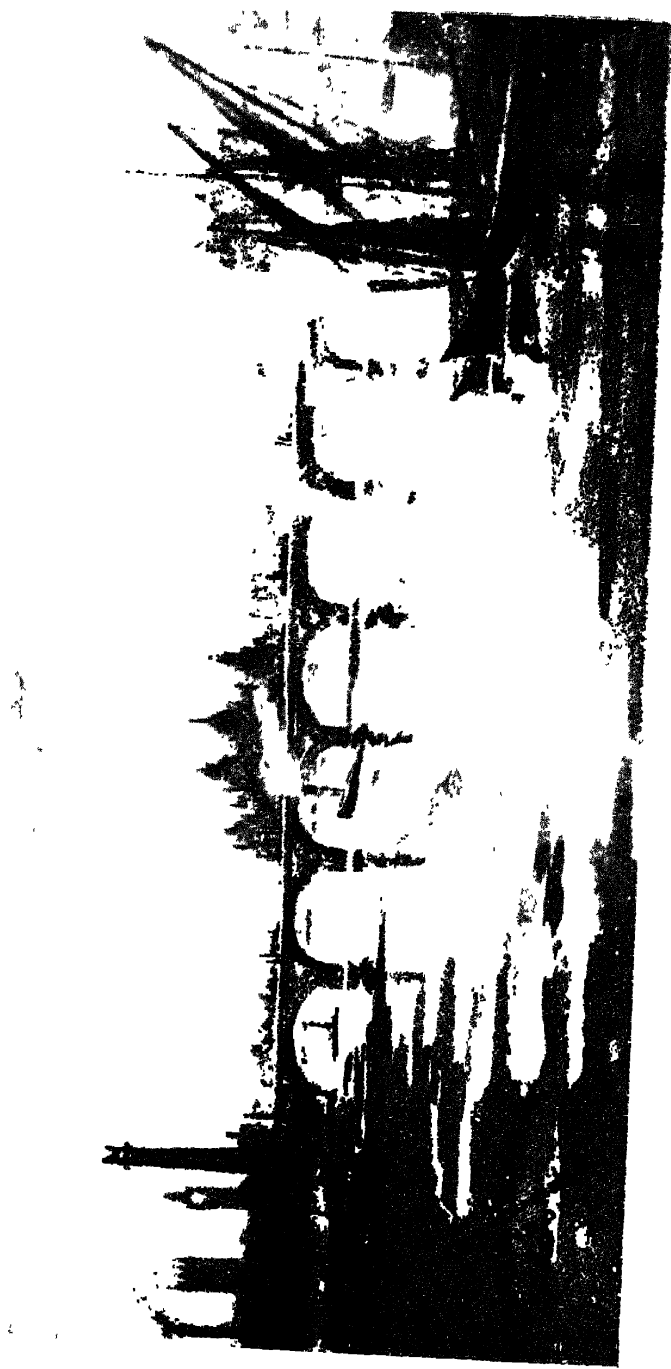
winter and eggs were scarce—were to be lightly-boiled at the last moment for this fine old sportsman, great philanthropist and idealist. We were about a dozen at lunch that day, among them the Portuguese Minister, General Sir David and Lady Bruce, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Griffiths, Sir Charles and Lady Wyndham Murray, Madame Naidu the Indian poetess (not a revolutionary at that time), Sir Ernest and Lady Shackleton and Lady (Philip) Watts.

The first course had gone round, and I had whispered into Lord Meath's ear that it was all right, his eggs were coming. The eggs came. Two of them were solemnly placed in front of him with some thinly cut bread-and-butter and small jugs of coffee and milk. I heaved a sigh of relief that everything had happily arrived, and that all anxiety on that score was at an end. The noble Lord broke the top, the egg was boiled as hard as a bullet, and would have done quite well for a game of cricket. I apologized humbly, and he kindly replied :

"Oh, well, I often only eat one," and proceeded to break the other. If anything, it was worse. The humiliation of this ridiculous situation. The cook had been so busy attending to the requirements of the eleven other guests that the preparation of anything so simple as a couple of eggs had been left to anyone. Naturally, I ordered a couple more eggs, but not with the same joyous feeling as before, because they were, I knew, regulation "London new-laid", whereas the two former had been, to my certain knowledge, carefully prepared by the hens at my mother's place in the country. However, if anything, the "Londoners" erred on the light side and all was well, and this great Patron of Empire was duly fed.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had been to Girton, was young and beautiful and a poetess. One day she brought an Indian to my house. He was very dark, dressed in a black frock coat, and she introduced him as "Mr. Gandhi. He is a great man and you will hear a great deal of him in the future."

I found him dull and plain and generally uninteresting and gave him no further thought, until I went to India for the first time just after the War and found that a man named Gandhi was then coming into the limelight. By 1932, Gandhi had been sent back to prison for the third time and Mdm Naidu, his great follower had been sentenced for twelve months. Evidently, she and others had decided he was to be their leader and to attain prominence as far back as 1910.



Waterloo Bridge

CHAPTER VIII

MY BOYS

I funk'd it—Hard to write—No grandchildren—Thoughts on bringing-up and money—Gave up journalism after fifteen years—Thanks to the Press—More women die in childbirth than miners lose their lives—A mother's recollections of two babes—Taught nothing till seven years old—A Christmas laugh—A baby in a cardboard box—A god of sport—Different characteristics in the same nest—A Red Cross Unit—No. 2 becomes a German prisoner—Charterhouse—No overcoats—Always in hospital—A boy's voice—A trip to a German island, which becomes celebrated in the War—Foreign languages—The problem of pocket-money—The problem of Cambridge.

FUNK, yes, pure unadulterated funk, has held me back from starting a chapter on my sons.

It seemed so impossible to begin, or how to begin, or what to say. And yet my boys filled the greatest number of years of my life. So I must begin, and I will begin this very minute, when all the rest of the work is done, simply because I am one of a million and odd British mothers who bore sons and lost them. Cruel as was the blow to me I would rather have them dead for the Empire and honoured, than alive and despised as shirkers. Alas, there were shirkers, and some of them rose to position while their schoolfellows fought for them overseas.

* * * * *

It will be hard to write. But it can be done. Anything can be done if one means to do it. Most people only talk and don't do.

How strangely the keys of remembrance vibrate. These funny old note-books lying before me resound with the laughter of little children. The mischievous ways and cheerful impudence and fun of youthful spirits. Gone from me for ever.

I shall never have any grandchildren now.

Yes, better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, is an old and true saying.

'Tis better to have borne babies than never to have known their pretty ways.

What am I to say of my two sons?

They were my life for the larger part of my life. I bore them, I nursed them, I brought them up, I worked for them. And in return, they worked and played, were naughty and good, were both keen sportsmen and won cups at tennis, golf, swimming and polo to the tune of twenty-two between them. Important cups too. They could shoot and ride, pick a motor to pieces and put it together again. They could sew a bit, and put a button on that never came off again. They both left Cambridge (without debts) for the Great War, and above all they were very good to and appreciative of their mother. That they did give me hours of serious anxiety I will not deny; but they generally came out right in the end. They were just decent English gentlemen of good descent and they gave their lives to their country, while I was left behind.

People often wondered why I struggled to give them such expensive educations; but I am a great believer in education (I had none worth speaking of myself) and I felt they should have as good an education as their ancestors and as good a chance of getting on in any profession or trade they chose for their futures. All ancestors on every side had been to public schools and 'varsities and ended in the services or professions. I knew they would each get a small sum of money at twenty-one. I was determined they should not know they would ever have that little bit of money, but make them understand they must work for themselves. People exaggerate so, and I wanted them to be workers, not slackers. They *never did know*. No one knew but one old friend. He wished to tell Harley himself at 21, and had him to lunch. He laid all the story before him, I believe, and then said, "Well, old boy, what do you think of that?"

"Mother's a brick, and I must pay her back," was the instant reply. On the spot, he settled to halve his little income with me so that I might keep *their home*, which they both loved and lived in to the end of their lives. Both boys were home lovers. By War-made wills, to my surprise and gratification, they both left their little to me. But what gratified me far, far more were the letters I received when death had claimed them saying practically they "owed me everything" and "the best mother who ever lived."

Those letters were my reward. Perhaps it pleased my vanity, but anyway it made me proud of the men I had brought into this world, for it is more difficult for Englishmen to say nice things than to do them.

I wrote little as a journalist after Harley came of age. He begged me not to. He had seen the years of grind. I thank the Press from my heart. It served me well and largely educated my sons. Others were knocking at the door, and I slipped out.

* * * * *

But I have been running on too fast.

I practically never saw my first child till he was thirteen weeks old. Acute typhoid from eating oysters laid me low, and when after seven or eight weeks I could be moved, I was taken to Switzerland to the mountain summer air. Carried up to Murren, I walked down cured six weeks later.

Yes, I recovered, but few realize that more women die every year in childbirth in England than miners are killed at their work. Just as there are more lives lost in the Air Force in peace time than in the whole Navy or Army.

Digging out some old papers I see some ridiculous little notes. All important to me at the time. We mothers are so interested in our babies' welfare.

Harley, the elder, this baby record reveals, weighed six-and-a-half pounds when he was born and was twenty-two inches long. Blue eyes that turned brown and golden hair that turned black. Only crawled at fourteen months. At two-and-a-half chattered incessantly. Mad about horses and balls, won't look at a doll; but loves books and pretending to write. Sucks his thumb and never goes to sleep unless he does. Fearful fights over it. Regular young pickle. Full of life and mischief. Eats very little, but very strong and well. One day ceased sucking the poor thumb and never reverted to it. Rode a bicycle horse at three. A most manly young imp. Speaks fluent German at four better than English perhaps.

Never still unless being read to, and at ten shot twenty-two sparrows one morning with an air gun.

Leslie, the second one, has his first tooth at the age of six months.

At three years old very small indeed. Can walk half a mile and talks German quite nicely. Very healthy and looks a perfect angel with pink cheeks and golden curls. Very obstinate at times. Loves being read to. Rides and drives chairs and everything else. Fond of music and stammers a bit. Thick set, solid and slow.

Measles very badly, temperature 105, followed by bronchitis. (That bronchitis was only got rid of at Harrow ten years later when he went there at thirteen. During those ten years Sir Douglas Powell, the great chest man, often wondered if I should ever rear him; but Mr. Bull's great care of him at the preparatory school at Pinewood did marvels.)

He became very broad-chested, a splendid swimmer, mad on boating, skating, fishing, and all the water sports. Played football for his House. Torpids, Xmas, 1904. Fair at tennis, squash (Bath Club later), golf (won the London Hospital Cup and Club cups), shooting and hunting later; but was always more of a student and less of an athlete than his brother, Harley.

The swimming at Harrow developed into his being one of the best at the Bath Club. A few weeks before war they had a great display of swimming and diving there. The best six included my boy and Lord Cowdray's son Geoffrey. Both were killed shortly after. Leslie went to Belgium ten days after war with the very first Red Cross Unit and by Christmas, 1914, joined the Royal Field Artillery and went to France. He was at Loos, September 25th, 1915, with his guns, and Harley was inside that awful town with the Xth Hussars.

My father had a fixed idea that half the children's brains were warped by being trained too young. So we children were never taught anything till we were seven, and we were made to lie down in the dark for nearly an hour after midday dinner. We were really being educated all the time, because he was always telling us stories and explaining things to us children on every conceivable subject at meals. The plan seemed to have worked so well in my family that I did the same with my boys.

* * * * *

One joyous Christmas, the babies and Alec were to give me a surprise. Long talks and whispers and fingers to lips went on, and Mum was not to know anything at all about it. Laughter and merriment, and my pretending to be hurt, and inquisitive, and all the rest of it to keep up the wonderful game of the great big secret.

At last the moment came when we were all agog with excitement to get through the double drawing-room up to the lighted Christmas Tree. There, leaning against the wall, was a great big cardboard dress box tied loosely and with wide blue sash ribbons. Of course, I was to be very surprised so of course I played up to the box idea with its huge label bearing my name. Much fuss, I untied the bow, down fell the lid at my feet, and there squeezed into the three foot high box stood Leslie all dressed up as Father Christmas. I see him to-day as I write, all smiles and rippling laughter, looking like a great big silver-spangled Christmas doll.

Out stepped the bonny bairn of three all pink and dimpled and golden-curled and smiling, "I'm the secret, Mum," he said, "I'm your secret," and he clasped me by the knees and shed all the silver spangles over my dress. Bless him.

That was the beginning of my boys, and now——

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Perhaps an interesting note is the diversity of character. Born of the same parents, reared in the same nursery, treated with strict similarity, these two boys turned out utterly different in every thought and detail. Harley took life seriously after his first childhood years. Leslie was one huge smile and all the troubles of existence seemed to pass him by. How does it come about that children should be so dissimilar? So utterly and entirely unlike one another. It was a subject I often pondered over and never found a solution.

Perhaps I had made too much of a god of sport, but I was so afraid of their being molly-coddled, being brought up by a woman. Women were not so sporting thirty years ago as they are to-day, it must be remembered. But sport and games teach us to play the game of life, whereas nearly everything we learn at school, except the Kings of England, is unlearned in life.

They each had their own room as grown-up men, living off and on with me, and shared the "nursery", as it was called to the last, as a study or den. Each having his own writing-table and belongings, but no longer a black cat or a parrot. They brought their friends by the dozens, whole teams to breakfast or to supper as they passed through London for some match at another public school perchance. Boys crowded everywhere. They came by the dozens. Nothing perturbed the old cook for "her dear young gentlemen".

We three used to have the most violent discussions and arguments, and they both became very interested in politics and diplomacy, probably from environment; but certainly their interest was sincere. Just as Harley was born to be a soldier and a diplomat, as Mr. Bull, his preparatory school-master had prophesied, Leslie was born to science. He would never have made a whole-hearted soldier. Discipline irked him and he disliked responsibility as much as the other took it in the day's stride.

Yes, utterly dissimilar in every way though reared in the same nest. Why?

* * * * *

Hope and ambition for one's children. Yes, hope and ambition for one's children, these are the very key notes of parenthood. The urge is inborn. The banner of hope looms large; one wants them to be better than oneself, one counts their lives to be happier than one's own; one wants them to avoid the pitfalls we have stumbled into. And above all, one wants them to be successful. Even from the earliest days one wants them to behave nicely at a children's party, one wants them to do well at school both in work and play. One wants them to choose their own vocation and work hard and get on, to find joy in the work and peace at the end.

Hope and ambition for one's children play a big part in our life. Happy are those who repeat it in their children's children.

* * * * *

Leslie and I were in France when War came. We had all three of us been there together the year before because my boys had a way of spending their holidays with me even after they were grown up. How unexpected that war was, and how magnificently the British nation rose to the call to arms.

* * * * *

Boy No. 2 must come first in these pages, because he was a German prisoner in Brussels ten days after war broke out. He went out with the No. 1 Red Cross Unit on August 14th, 1914, and when they reached Brussels on the 16th, the Germans were outside the gates. Everyone expected the whole thing would be over in three months, and nothing and nobody had been prepared for war.

And yet, on second thoughts, I had better go back again a little.

After an awful tussle with my clergyman co-trustee, a pessimistic, old-fashioned scholarly person, who said "thirteen was too young for school," I landed Harley at Charterhouse. I took him down for the exam. There were a hundred and fifty candidates for seventy-two vacancies. He passed. In due time all his kit was ready, and oh, dear, what a lot it seemed to cost and how ill I could afford it, and then I took him down. Every mother who has taken her first-born to his first term at Public School knows what that means.

It seemed a never-ending day. He seemed so small, Charterhouse seemed so big. A sensitive lad in spite of his games and powers of organization. The head of his preparatory school, Mr. Bull, said he would rather trust him at twelve to take a team to St. Albans and bring them back safely than he could trust some of his masters.

It was foggy and cold that late September day but he was allowed to go down the hill to the station with me. The train was late.

"I think the train must have forgotten me," I said.

"I wish it had," sobbed the little boy at my side.

A month later he wrote: "Mum, dear, you must never send Leslie here. He would be dead in a month. It's bitterly cold. We aren't allowed to wear overcoats. We have to go to Chapel along windy freezing cloisters in the cold dark of the morning, coatless and without breakfast, and sit and shiver in the Chapel. It would kill Leslie with his bronchitis. Please don't send him here. I'm all right, of course, then I'm different."

Later they were given hot (or tepid) coffee before sallying out on this daily religious mission. No wonder the boys hated chapel.

Luckily Alec had also put them both down for Harrow, so I got Leslie in. Harrow cured him, but I went through years of anxiety with that poor little chap's chest, years of bronchitis kettles, and cough mixtures and inhaling, and his struggles for breath.

* * * * *

My boys could lay no claims to genius. They were quite ordinary, quite average.

Children to-day seem to be born grown up. They do everything, eat everything, hear everything, and childhood seems to be the only thing denied them. If I had dozens of children to deal with, I should go back to the formulæ of no real lessons till seven, and one hour's rest every day. Those two maxims help the child in after life. When Harley passed into Charterhouse, he got straight into the choir, but for two years he insisted that he never learnt a thing since he had left his loved preparatory school. Cheerful for me, who had to pay the bills. He, who had never been ill in his life, was now constantly in hospital. He was extraordinarily unlucky, measles, 'flu, chicken-pox, throats, mumps, fevers followed one another, which left delicacy through life. So much so that he was twice nearly invalided out of the Army. But his determined character withstood the handicap and hence his flight over the Himalayas later. Leslie, who had been the bronchitis baby, never had a day's illness at Harrow. Looking back I feel I ought never to have left Harley at Charterhouse. He looked miserably ill and thin, although in his second year he was playing football and cricket for his House. The lad said nothing, he never complained, implored me to say nothing, but once he left he never went back, and never mentioned Charterhouse again. (The school is very different nowadays.)

* * * * *

In that school chapel at Charterhouse one Sunday morning a beautiful boy's voice rose gently in the anthem. It increased and strengthened in its solo.

It was my boy's voice. He, yes, he was singing alone in that big church. A boy's clear bell-like tone and yet the same voice with its touch of tears that had been one of the greatest

charms of his father, who died when Harley was only six. That ring of tears in the voice is rare. I've seen strong men sit and quietly cry both when my husband, and, later, my boy sang. Yes, the boy was only six when the father died so it was heritage, not conscious imitation that brought those tears. I believe on those great concert nights the hall held nearly a thousand people, and my little boy of fourteen stood up alone to sing the solos for the concert.

And his reward, poor nervous little boy—who had been too overcome to eat his tea—was to go back to his temporary home and to bed without any food, "but I drank my water bottle quite empty just to fill up," he wrote.

Those were the days when parents had to pay sixpence extra for a boy to have an egg for breakfast.

On the other hand, Leslie adored Harrow and was very, very happy and well in Dr. Woods house, later, Mr. Ford's. He never severed his connection with his old school and constantly went back for matches. The modern side was practically started for him because I was so dead against Greek and so insistent on European languages. Six boys were got together along these modern lines.

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When they were ten and eleven (there was really sixteen months only between them) I took them a cheap trip to a very German island in the North Sea for their holidays.

It was a very, very German island.

Every little boy and girl did Military drill. Many of them wore miniature uniforms or leastways helmets and swords, and on the beach every morning, and all morning, those toddling babies, young men and maids, went through military exercises. Twelve years later war came.

Borkum had one strange and strict rule at that time. No Jews were allowed to land upon its soil. I wrote a lot of copy there, enough to pay entirely for our holiday. The boys had become quite adept at picking up little stories for me, or noticing strange habits and customs, all of which helped considerably. But it was irksome to be always writing when one wanted to be playing. We lived at a little pension place that gave us our early coffee and our midday meal; but we had to forage for tea and supper, which we often made at home with our good old English tea basket, and all the shopping and most of the cookery was done by my two young men. Playing with the



The three of us just before the War, 1914



Portrait of the writer by Schmalz, 1897.

German children, swimming and tennis improved their German immensely, and the whole thing was such a success I agreed to take them to France as soon as they knew French pretty well. The following summer we went to Brittany as a reward for working at their French ; but they learnt no French in Brittany. The whole place was English, whereas in Borkum near Heligoland, our little English flag above our bathing tent was the only foreign one on those German sands.

Those two foreign languages proved of great value during the War.

Harley saying after a voyage to Australia, where he was sent for his health for a few months : "I say, Mum, I want to thank you for sending me to Charterhouse and Cambridge. What a difference it does make to a chap—and that old reverend guardian fought you—but you won and you were right."

Leslie after Brussels, sitting on the blue sofa : "I say, what a brute I must have been, a regular young pup about the time I left Harrow and went to Cambridge. I can't think how you ever put up with me. I thought I knew everything then. What a fool I was. I know now I knew nothing, but, I say, it was ripping of you to give me that education."

Could a mother be more rewarded ?

* * * * *

As the years rolled on many problems worried me, among them pocket money, and latch-keys.

Allowances bring self-reliance. My father gave me a pound a month when I was twelve, and with that I had to buy my gloves. That alone taught me to keep them clean and mend them. The rest I had for pocket money. Three years later the sum was doubled and I had to buy stockings and furbelows. At seventeen I had £50 a year to dress myself. And when I came out I was started off with a sort of trousseau of opera cloaks and evening dresses and £80 the first year for all expenses, including buses or getting about, and £100 the next. It proved a splendid plan, and my father was a rich man ; for it taught me to think twice before throwing money about. That plan I more or less repeated with my boys.

At the Public Schools I started definite allowances to cover their clothes. And at Cambridge I gave each of them £300 a year and they spent most of their holidays with me. It costs more nowadays I believe, but £300 allowed them to join all

the games and pay their share in everything. It is awful to put anyone into a position where he has to cadge for free meals which he cannot return. They saved up to go abroad, and if the money ran short they had a home to come to. I was always explaining that however carefully one may budget for a home or for life generally, at least half as much again is required for those incidental expenses or "incidents" which arise. Trust a boy, explain everything carefully, and he doesn't often exceed his means. Parenthood is a school for the teaching of wisdom and self-restraint ; a cruel school, whose punishments are harsh, and it is a great handicap to be a sole parent, not only for the parent but for the child. It's a two parent job.

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CHAPTER IX

LESLIE AND THE BRITISH RED CROSS

Off to France in ten days—Sir Frederick Treves—Brussels—News-paper correspondents recalled—Martial law and a proclamation—Total silence—A hundred and twenty Red Cross workers lost—Wonderful Germans—Splendid uniforms—Marvellous marching—First wounded coming in—Germans hurt that England had gone against them—Food scarce—British money running short—We treated all nations alike—Scrambling into horse trucks containing dead and dying—Almost at our last sou—Germans taught to fear English doctors—Opinions changed and rings and watches offered in gratitude—Admiration for British nurses—Marvellous Burgomeister Max—A tiny diary—Anxious days—A welcome telegram.

On 3rd August 1914, as mentioned in the last chapter, my son Leslie and I were in France on a short holiday. He was playing golf at Le Touquet with Cambridge friends, when the French mobilization order came out. On their return to the hotel from a game they found the whole staff, chefs, waiters and every kind of man, busy packing up to go each to his allotted town. Every Frenchman, being a conscript, knew exactly where he was to report himself at any moment of mobilization. These Cambridge boys drove the trams and carried trunks, and ran about being generally useful while France mobilized.

That was the day of the German ultimatum to Belgium, and by the following day Germany had invaded Luxembourg and had declared war on Russia.

Boulogne pier was quickly filled with British cars intending to return to England, but they were all caught and retained.

Leslie returned to England almost immediately, and made his way straight from the train to the London Hospital, where he put his name down as a "dresser" and along with doctors and fellow-students went to Red Cross Headquarters, already started at Devonshire House, for enrolment as the quickest way to get to the Front. Everyone then expected war to last a few months. (British Expeditionary Force landed in France 7th August.)

After all the excitement in France and having come home by the last passenger boat, he and I noted with surprise the

placid state of London, as War was hardly mentioned and no one appeared to realize properly that France was a-boil. London did seem asleep. But a few days later everyone had wakened up. He had received a card from the British Red Cross Society, signed by Sir Frederick Treves, telling him he had been accepted for the First Balkan Unit, but on August 14th, 1914, he was sent with his unit to Belgium, via Ostend, instead. I saw them off from Charing Cross early that Sunday morning, August 16th, just twelve days after our entry into the War, to "destination unknown". There were 120 of them—ten highly qualified surgeons from different hospitals, ten young men like himself called "dressers" and a hundred nurses, many of them matrons from our great London Hospitals. "44" was the number on his brassard in the First No. 1 Red Cross Contingent. Think of the hundreds of thousands that came later; but his number "44" and many other of his treasures now repose in the War Museum.

On arrival at Brussels two days later, he wrote :

"Dearest Mother,

"We got a great reception from a large crowd outside the station. 'Vive l'Angleterre', and one man shouted 'Enfin', evidently thinking us the Army! They had been expecting the British Army for some days and 'Where are the English?' soon became a constant cry. We were in our officers' uniforms with Red Cross brassards on our arms and caps, so were probably the first British uniforms in Belgium since Waterloo, ninety-nine years ago."

His unit was put at the Hotel Astoria.

"We all arrived here safely and are hoping to move every minute. Peasants have been arriving all day long in carts and walking, carrying bundles of belongings they have managed to save. Many of their homes have been razed to the ground and they are all terrified of the Uhlan.

"People here think there has been a Belgian defeat and that the Germans may enter at any moment. (Brussels is unfortified.) If they do, I suppose we shall be captured and made to work for them—damn it. So my next letter may be censored, and heavily too.

"An English correspondent is taking this over—all correspondents have been recalled—and posting it in England, so I may say what I like, but please don't repeat anything. We are received everywhere as if we were young heroes



Harley, 10th Hussars and after Battle of Loos, R.A.F.
Killed while in Temporary Command in Transjordan, 1926.



Leslie, No. 1 Red Cross Unit, Brussels ten days after War—
later R.F.A. Killed, Front, 1916.



Leslie Tweedie Memorial Lounge (War) Y.M.C.A. Shakespeare Hut, Christmas Day, 1917 (opened by Lord French).

with 'Vive l'Angleterre' on every side, and the amount of saluting I have done, both to military and civil who raise their hats and stare, has tired me out. They unfortunately call us *dressers*—'coiffeurs'—which is rather terrible. Am in an awful hurry, so au revoir and best of love,

"From your loving son,

"LESLIE."

" 'Deutschland.' Uniforms excellent. Colour difficult to see. Boots excellent. Horses wonderful. Many aeroplanes fly over quite low.

"Only 5,000 men left in the City; the rest pass through. Martial law proclaimed. Here it is.

PROKLAMATION.

August 20th, 1914.

GERMAN TROOPS WILL PASS THROUGH BRUSSELS TO-DAY AND THE FOLLOWING DAYS, AND ARE COMPELLED BY CIRCUMSTANCES TO REQUIRE THE CITY TO PROVIDE LODGINGS, FOOD AND SUPPLIES. THESE SERVICES WILL BE REGULARLY PAID FOR THROUGH THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES.

I RELY ON THE POPULATION TO CONFORM WITHOUT RESISTANCE TO THESE NECESSITIES OF WAR, AND ESPECIALLY THAT NO VIOLATION WILL BE ATTEMPTED AGAINST THE TROOPS, AND THAT THE SUPPLIES REQUIRED WILL BE PROMPTLY FURNISHED.

IN THIS CASE I GUARANTEE THE PRESERVATION OF THE CITY AND THE SAFETY OF THE INHABITANTS.

IF, HOWEVER, AS UNFORTUNATELY HAS HAPPENED ELSEWHERE, THE TROOPS SHOULD BE MOBBED OR FIRED UPON, OR ANY FIRES OR EXPLOSIONS OF ANY KIND OCCUR, I SHALL BE FORCED TO TAKE THE MOST SEVERE MEASURES.

SIXT VON ARMIN,

GENERAL COMMANDING THE ARMY CORPS.

* * * * *

Then followed total silence. Total silence for weeks and weeks. Nothing whatever was heard of the No. 1 Red Cross Unit. We thought they had gone on to Namur. Silence, awful silence, for ten long weeks. Cruel silence for the families and belongings of 120 Red Cross workers.

* * * * *

But the boy kept a tiny, tightly-written diary from which one can follow the story a little, although the diary had naturally to be very scanty under such war conditions.

In the next few notes, made in this tiny pocket note-book which came home ten weeks later, we get a picture of what Brussels underwent when the Germans reached the town. He wrote :

"19th August. Nothing decided yet as to our disposal. We got our stores up from the station. We hear definite news that the Belgians have retreated. The Garde Civique has dispersed and the Staff has left. Thus no resistance can be offered by the town, which is just as well. Fearful, tense excitement. During the night we heard the 'Marseillaise' being sung in the distance by people in town.

"20th August. We have started to turn this fine hotel into a hospital. The Germans are now only two kilometres away and may be in at any moment. After lunch they arrived. At first small groups of officers rode through the town. Then the troops came—thousands of them. We do not go out or show ourselves as our uniforms might excite them.

"The Astoria is now a hospital with fifty or more beds, flying the Red Cross flag. Troops pass slowly all day and night. All look fairly fit, but hardly battle-stained. They sing 'Die Wacht' . . .

"21st August. Troops have been passing all the time. Now mostly heavy artillery and transport. We are busy getting beds ready and unpacking our stores. Dr. D. was stopped in the road by a picket who inspected his Belgian Red Cross papers. He reports much drunkenness last night amongst the Germans. I wish somebody would make use of us somehow. Two of our surgeons, Austin and Elliot, have been marched off.

"During the next few days 500,000 troops marched through Brussels. Miles and miles of them. Regiment after regiment and all clad in the new uniforms served out the moment the War began. These millions of uniforms, boots and equipments must have been ready, for they were in use almost at once.

"So wonderful the grey-green colour of the uniforms that French, Belgian and English soldiers told me they could not see the Germans until they were within 200 metres of them.

"One of the most inspiring and moving things is the singing of these German chaps. All day and all night one could hear the well-known songs we heard in Borkum. Sometimes they all sing in unison, sometimes in parts, and certainly the human voice stirred one's inner chords.

"We missed the dogs. The usual milk-cart dog has been absent because of the shortage of milk, but we saw the fine cartage dogs hauling guns as cheerfully as if they were milk cans. They are a splendid breed, strong and sturdy and well-fitted for the job.

"From the moment the Germans entered, British uniforms were unwise. So we got into weird 'mufti' as we had not got any. But we have some money, so we managed to appear in more or less respectable, though in rather heterogeneous, attire. My old grey flannel trousers have come in handy.

"The one great impression left in one's mind of the German rule in Brussels is their marvellous organization—endless organization. If organization can command victory, then the Germans must be victorious. Their organization strikes me dumb.

"*24th August.* We were allowed out for the first time with English brassards on. Mine was stamped three times in a week. There are not many Germans in town, and these look very dirty, tired and dejected. A perfect panic arose in the afternoon. . . . We heard the guns very plainly. They must be very near for even the hotel shakes. Hope the Allies come in to-night. Everyone is expecting them hourly. Wounded men pass through in cartloads, but I do not know if any stop in Brussels.

"We offered the Hall Porter one franc for every wounded man brought to us. He earned nothing.

"*25th August.* The guns started at 7 a.m. again. More troops pass through, very small men and very tired. The town is very quiet. Difficult to get any authentic news.

"M. Max, the Burgomaster, is a wonder—I've seen him several times. The Germans have found him a pretty tough customer. He went every day to the poorer quarters of the town to quieten the people and put up printed notices *under* the German proclamations. . . .

"A friend, straight from the Admiralty, told me of a strange thing that happened a few days back. A submarine penetrated behind Heligoland, saw the German Fleet, was twice fired at, but both shots missed. She sank and doubtless the Germans thought they had done for her. For *thirty* hours these men stayed under water. The first twenty-four were passable. The last six were Hell. In the dead of night they rose, steamed off and two days later our Navy attacked the ships; they knew exactly where they were and how placed, thanks to the wondrous daring of that little submarine.

"Just to show an instance of German military discipline ; we went one day to the swimming baths where we had become habitués, and the good lady and her husband informed us the German soldiers had taken a fancy to the baths. Barely had they told us this than an officer and seventy soldiers marched in. The officer whistled. Every soldier started to undress. Some were ready long before the others, but they waited.

"The officer whistled. In they all jumped. The officer whistled. Out they all came. The officer whistled again when they were dressed and off they all marched. It was the same procedure with subsequent batches.

"We hardly ever see an English newspaper. As much as 30s. was given for a smuggled-in London *Times* and it was handed round for us to read in single pages. Anyone discovered with newspapers was liable to be shot.

"*30th August.* We have been planted on station work for the wounded. We had a train in fairly early with Germans, French and English. Ran about hard giving them all bread and water. Dressed a few in the train. Our Tommies seemed mighty glad to see us. They had mostly fought at Mons, which they said was absolute slaughter. Some regiments were left to cover the retreat with practically no ammunition and were mowed down by the German guns. The train only stopped a quarter of an hour. The German soldiers helped us a lot. Most Germans say they were very hurt when England turned against them. They say the British shooting was extremely good, also that they are now at Cambrai turning the Allies' flank, and they add that the blue and red French uniform has been the Frenchman's undoing.

"*1st September.* The German civil government has arrived to-day and has taken up the whole hotel except one floor, which is still our ambulance. They are not a nice crowd, not of the officer type, of course. We heard at the station accounts from some Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. They were nearly wiped out, being left to cover a retreat with practically no ammunition. Our patients doing well. A zeppelin flew over early this morning.

"*2nd September.* Our money is running very short and consequently our food. We went down to Schaerbeck station ; one train in, full of French and German wounded. Lots to do, and the poor beggars very thirsty and hungry. And they have no emergency dressings to alleviate their sufferings. Some

have been shunted about for five days in the train and are in an awful mess. The German officer in charge of the station guard has been very useful to us, getting clean water and bread ; he lives in England and is married to an Englishwoman there.

"4th September. German naval men and officers arrived at the hotel to-day. I wonder if their ship is sunk. The Germans admit having lost 200,000 men already. They are very irritable to-day, according to the American Consul. But it is difficult to find out anything. From the roof of this hotel one gets the most wonderful view of Brussels. I have to hide behind a parapet to look over, not daring to show an English uniform which might mean a rapid journey into Germany.

"6th September. Slept most of the day after a long, hard night at station work. Almost at our last sou.

"We have really been beginning to wonder what is to happen to us. We are badly in want of money and have to keep ourselves. We are the only English in Brussels, so that our position is always dangerous, for the Red Cross is not always respected. We have constantly been taken up as spies and searched and identified.

"I myself had twenty-eight hours of this when working one night at the station, where most of the people knew me. I was suddenly pounced upon and taken up with some others. We were searched literally to the skin, for I had to stand in a state of Nature while every atom of the lining of my clothes, even to my boots, was thoroughly searched and my passports were carefully conned. So my grandfather was not the only suspected spy in our family.*

"Seeing that we were at our wits' end for money after nearly

* The incident to which Leslie referred happened to my father, Dr. George Harley, F.R.S., in 1854, during the Crimean War, when he was then studying in Vienna. It was reported that there was fearful suffering among the troops, from dearth of surgeons, in the army of Omar Pasha, the Great Turkish General, who, siding with England and France against the Russians, was fighting bravely for the liberty of his country. My father made up his mind to join the Turks as a volunteer medico. He accordingly set out from Vienna and with difficulty and adventure got as far as Leibach. At that time it was very uncertain which side Austria would take in the War and between Leibach and the River Pruth my father, to his dismay, walked into an army of 40,000 Austrians who were *en route* to form an army of observation. At the outposts he was arrested as a spy and condemned to be shot at six o'clock the following morning. During the night he managed to squeeze himself out through a small window opening in his cell and, eluding the sentry, he sped through the darkness with the words "Condemned to be shot" ever ringing in his ears. After eight days and nights walking he arrived at a little *wirthshaus* (tavern) in Styria, where he was kindly treated, and then made his way to Trieste, his ardour to help Omar Pasha having by this time cooled. I told the full story of his exciting adventure in my book, "George Harley, F.R.S., or the Life of a London Physician".

a month and that our numbers had increased by nurses of St. John of Jerusalem added to our Unit, the situation was desperate. Then arrived a providential offer.

"M. van Naeye, a rich man, had a house in Brussels and he came forward and offered us the loan of it. He had fitted it up as a hospital with fifty beds. Accordingly thither we repaired and there we remained for five weeks. I slept on a stretcher during that time. It was a magnificent house, but the boards were bare and the furniture scant. However, the kindness and courtesy of its owner were unbounded.

"Rations were scarce. We were supposed to get half a pound of meat each, but rarely got it, and our endless potato stews were a subject of mirth. Lucky was the man who on diving in got a respectable piece of meat. Fish there were none; eggs were rare; fowls did not exist, unless some kind Belgian left us a present of eatables, which happened sometimes. Fruit, vegetables, a few eggs were left in turn and we used to toss for them. They were a veritable godsend, and no one waited to ask for thanks. It is rather like living on porridge; one feels over-satisfied at the time and mighty unsatisfied an hour later. The Irishman lives on potatoes and knows it, but we live on potatoes and water and pretend it is something else.

"Station again to-night and practically no sleep. Enormous amount of dressing to be done, and all hungry too; many of them have been in the train already thirty-six hours. Poor devils. They lay on straw, or what *was* straw, in trucks, perhaps thirty or more in each. Most of the German Tommies who act as guards for prisoners are very decent to them.

"One poor fellow I dressed had his right hand shattered to pieces by shrapnel. A beastly sight. He kept on asking if he would lose it. I, of course, said no, but am quite sure he ought to have it off at once.

"I never shall understand why the Germans elected to give us station work, because at the station we saw all the wounded and might have collected tales of all sorts. There was nowhere in Brussels where so much could be seen or heard of the War as at the station. Perhaps they sent us there as a compliment. If the latter, that trust was not misplaced. Red Cross are International, and International to the letter and the law, we were.

"We treated all nations alike and did our best—that I can honestly say, for no men and women ever worked better or less disinterestedly than our little party here at Schaerbeck.

"We have all been searched again, both men and women on different occasions, searched to the skin. The women, by women. It is part of the system, I suppose. Like everything else, they did it thoroughly. On the whole they treat us very well, with a few rather disagreeable exceptions.

"We do everything to be careful and to inspire the trust of our captors. We have arranged never to ask a question, and consequently any information we receive is only that given freely. We do not ask the results of battles, the numbers of wounded or anything. Our position is always precarious, for a sort of half-idea has spread that because we are English we must be spies, and the Germans greatly doubt that we can be so international as to treat the wounded as wounded, and every country alike.

"The officers of a famous Prussian regiment of guards came in, in which a certain Captain and Baron was an old friend of mine. I was dying to ask these wounded men about their comrade, but I have refrained and kept to our rule never to ask any questions.

"As a rule two or three trains come in every night. During the worst night I have ever had, there were six trains and as each contained something like 1,500 wounded men, 10,000 must have passed through Brussels in those dark hours. Many times these weary train-loads have had neither food nor drink for thirty hours, and it was no small job to administer sustenance alone to such numbers of distressed people, especially as they have still many hours to go on before reaching the frontier at Aix-la-Chapelle. The War trains rarely travel more than eight miles an hour. . . . And what of the trains?

"Occasionally, but very occasionally, there is a hospital train, but we have never seen inside one. They do not want our services. A few first-class carriages contain officers, but mostly third-class and cattle-trucks, which latter are the best for the dangerously wounded, as thirty men could lie flat upon the floor on straw.

"It is a weird experience scrambling up in the dark into one of these trucks with one's little lantern, to find thirty sick men lying closely packed side by side, some in agony, some sleeping the sleep of prostration, some delirious, and all hungry and cold. Sometimes we take out a dead man. Often we take out a serious case and if he cannot be attended to on the platform, he is taken to our little station hospital. Thence the stretcher-

bearers take him off, re-bandaged and made comfortable, to one of the city hospitals. The very worst cases are placed in one of our few precious station beds.

"Only once have we had a man die on our hands. When we opened the door of the carriage, he was insensible from a serious hæmorrhage in the neck and shoulder ; but although we resuscitated him for four hours, he passed away in our little hospital-room at the end of that time.

"Nearly all the wounded are Germans. The Belgians go on to Antwerp now and the English pass through to Germany as prisoners of war. Brussels only shelters the wounded who cannot pass on. One does not want to dwell on the horrors of those nights. The weird, lurid glow from the little lantern ; the white set faces of the sleeping, stricken men. The terrible stench from dirty clothes that have been worn in the trenches, from congealed blood and active pus, from filthy straw—from all the horrors of war in its grimmest form. . . .

"Although sometimes the men have a perfectly agonized expression when they hear we are English doctors and nurses, because they have been told we are so cruel to the German wounded, generally their admiration and gratitude are unbounded when we have tended them. Indeed, in many cases, both at the station and in the hospitals, patients have wished to take off a ring, a note-case or a pen-knife, or some treasured trinket to give as a token of gratitude. They never seem to understand that, being Red Cross, we can take nothing, and that all we ask is that they tell their countrymen British people have treated them kindly.

" 'We will, we will,' is the invariable reply.

"Constantly these train-loads of shattered men tell us that the Germans are in Paris, and often they ask what town they are passing through, but sleepy, wounded, exhausted men in the dead of night are seldom communicative and it is the lesser cases, the men who can sit up in third-class carriages, who like to talk. During these night vigils, we hear the constant booming of guns and it seems quite strange when the firing ceases.

"Some of the men had been wounded near Paris, some of them have been in the train now for five long days with practically no food. Shrapnel is the most common cause of the wounds. As the shell bursts in mid-air, one or more bits fall on the victims. A number of the men have had four or five different wounds. Bayonet thrusts in the back are not uncommon among the

Germans. Splinters of large shell in arms and legs have often been the cause of awful wounds. Considering the terrible nature of some of the wounds, the men of all nations are wonderfully cheerful.

"Belgian refugees are leaving their country in thousands and making for England. The Royal Palace here has been turned into a hospital, but the British doctors are not allowed to attend, although British nurses are in constant demand. Many of them are billeted in the town and work with us at the station or at the Palace or in other hospitals.

"It is no unusual thing for the wounded to arrive labelled 'Shot at such and such date. This will not require dressing for five, eight or ten days,' as the case might be. Sometimes the dressings are first-class, sometimes pretty bad. But there is no doubt about it, the English soldiers heal quicker with their emergency dressings and are much less prone to gangrene than the Germans. All of our men had been inoculated and that of course helps considerably.

"Our British nurses, one hundred of them, are kept busy all the time and are much appreciated. Their neat dresses and well-trained ways seem to inspire confidence.

"The nights have become very cold and the long intervals between the trains very trying. Whenever a train arrives we scuttle about in the semi-darkness, bravely helped by the station officials and stretcher-bearers for one or two hours, according to the amount of work that has to be done, and then we may have to wait for another train through the cold small hours of the night with nothing to do. Everyone at the station is very nice to us and seems to appreciate our services.

"There is a terrible monotony as the hundreds become thousands of wounded and the thousands become tens of thousands, and yet we can do so little for them in the long and tedious journey to Germany. (Germans occupied Brussels from 20th Aug.)

"We have come to feel we are fixtures in Brussels. Every suggested move to the front has been stopped, and our life consists of station work, just everlasting station work. Meanwhile we know very little of the actual progress of the War.

"*13th September.* We hear last Sunday the Germans were six miles from Paris; to-day they have been driven back fifty miles since the defeat at the Marne, after almost entering the door of their goal.

"*16th September.* I am afraid I am getting lazy about my

diary. One day is deadly like another, and there is always the chance of it being found out in spite of my care that there should be nothing incriminating in it. As the nights grow colder, cold water and bread made with doses of potatoes is not very cheery diet for the wounded, but it is all that the military authorities allow. Baron von Ludwig, German Governor, has ordered the Belgian flags to be taken down by Proclamation in three languages. Immediately afterwards up went the reply from Adolphe Max :

“‘Let us take in our flags to prevent conflict and await patiently the hour of Reparation.’”

“Next morning this notice by the Burgomeister, whose pluck has been widely admired, was everywhere covered up with blank papers by the Germans.

“The seventh week of the War is over and yet we who are locked up in Brussels know nothing except that there is a great tussle going forward on the Aisne. The long trail of wounded Germans shows us that Germany has been weakened and that tens of thousands have been killed off.

“In the meantime she has ruined Belgium, laid her cities and villages low and shot her men. She controls Brussels and has kept us locked up.”

* * * * *

While Leslie was writing in the smallest caligraphy his funny little diary, we in London were hearing nothing whatever of that Red Cross Unit.

Week by week went by and nothing was known of them. We all tried to get news. I wrote letters through French, Norwegian and German friends, but nothing happened. They were terrible weeks of anxiety. The one and only solace lay in the fact that we did not read in our scanty war news that the whole of the Number One Red Cross Unit had been destroyed. One day we did see that two of the ten surgeons had been taken as prisoners to Ruhleben, and were in fact the first English prisoners in Germany—an act against Red Cross jurisdiction. They are not combatants and serve the sick of every land. Still the weeks rolled on and still no news. “No news is good news,” I repeated to myself a dozen times a day as I worked at my jobs for the Y.M.C.A. and the Navy—“yes, of course no news is good news,” I persisted. But they were anxious days.

* * * * *

England was bustling, things were moving. My own forty huts were materializing ; my first quarter-million collected books were already in France ; but still no news from Brussels.

* * * * *

We, in London, were plunged in semi-darkness every night, with a protecting airship hovering over us. Young men marched about in straw hats and part uniforms and 5,000 drilled daily in Regent's Park.

Our whole land was dotted about with camps. Territorials had already gone to the Front. Officers' Training Corps were sending their youth into the service for three months' training and then for the battle line. Khaki could not be made fast enough. Eight thousand horses were coming over from Canada and South America, green and raw, all requiring cavalry training.

On October 9th, 1914, the fall of Antwerp took place and two days later began the desperate, long-drawn battle of Ypres and Armentières. I could not imagine what was happening to poor old Leslie as I knew his unit was right among the Germans ; though purely Red Cross, yet it was British, and on this latter score alone it seemed to me probable that he had been made a prisoner of war. I plunged into my Home War Work as a safety-valve to my anxiety and kept hoping for the best.

Then came a telegram : "All arrived Copenhagen. Awful journey but well. Wire all news. Leslie."

Marvellous, wonderful, overpowering news ; but how or why did they get there ?

As will be seen from his diary, he received what can only be described as decent treatment.

His diary continues :

"The ninth week of War has begun and we have suddenly been informed we are to leave Brussels, that we must pack up and be off at once, but no one would tell us where we are going. We have been told that London, almost all England, is in German hands. We waited five hours at the station, and there we were told we were going to Copenhagen. Why Copenhagen ?

But the moment I had had that wire from Copenhagen, my mind was at ease. I knew Leslie would go off to our old friend, the great Dr. Knut Faber, and through him everything necessary could be arranged. It was. The English Red Cross received a cheque for £1,000 for food and clothes and long-delayed necessities. I had taken both boys round the northern

capitals in a P. & O. steamer a few years before, so he knew Faber personally.

"As a slight reward for our services the Belgian Red Cross has given us a charming little medal about the size of a sixpence, on which is engraved the head of the little Belgian Princess, the only daughter of King Albert. It is very artistic and is tied with red, yellow and black ribbon."

Then came a letter :

"We said good-bye to our many friends and went to the station, where we found twenty-two soldiers allotted as our guard and so started for the Danish frontier. Fourth-class German carriages with hard wooden seats are not the most luxurious things in the world, and as we were tightly packed and not allowed to leave the carriages for four days and nights we were not too comfortable.

"We passed deserted, destroyed and burnt villages in Belgium and have seen the awful destruction at Louvain.

"At Cologne we halted and have been allowed to leave the carriages, and marched off for a meal, our first real meal, which was rendered amusing by the comic German papers they gave each of us as a souvenir. At every small town at which the train stopped, we were ordered to pull down the blinds by our twenty-two sentries, and told that if found looking out we would be shot.

"We have come through Hamburg. On passing the Kiel Canal at three o'clock in the morning we were all more or less asleep, laying our heads on one another's shoulders as we sat bolt upright from want of space, but our escorting soldiers entered the different compartments and stayed at the doors with their rifles cocked, announcing that they would shoot anyone who moved or tried to look out of the window. These soldier guards—although most severe on the journey—took most affectionate adieux when they left us over the frontier on free soil.

"At length we reached Copenhagen. The tension of Brussels, the scarcity of money and food, the anxiety of the work and nearly five days' railway journey under such uncomfortable circumstances made us very glad of a bath, a warm meal and a good bed. All these were forthcoming in Copenhagen, where we have received the warmest possible welcome.

"Never can sufficient be said for the kindness of the people of Denmark. They fêted us and feasted us for days. The medical

fraternity showed us over their hospitals, gave us luncheons, teas and dinners, and were goodness itself. We were lost in admiration of the beauty of the University.

"We came home by Christiania and Bergen in detachments to Newcastle as accommodation was procurable. Forty-eight hours on one of the smallest boats and roughest seas I can remember. We landed safely at Newcastle after having hugged the coast of Scotland to avoid the mines on October 24th, exactly ten weeks after we had left London. Ten days' travelling instead of ten hours by the proper route.

"1st November, 1914. A few days after my return home, we have reached the ninetieth day of the war, sixty of which I spent in Brussels. The South African rebellion has collapsed. Russia, although retired from East Prussia after the heavy defeat of Tannenberg (August 20th), has been chasing the Austrian Army through Galicia. Japan has been making good headway in Chinese waters, for Tsing Tao has fallen to her arms. Germany is making great efforts to reach Calais, but, thanks to the unconquerable remnants of the French army at Ypres, she has been kept back.

"11th November. The best news to-day is that the Australians have sunk the elusive *Emden*, the destroyer of such quantities of our shipping.

"As I close this diary, the name *Emden* recalls a youthful memory.

"When a little boy of eight, Mother took Harley and me to the island of Borkum to improve the German imbibed in the nursery from a Fräulein. Borkum was then nothing but sand-dunes and shrimps and seagulls and German bathers. To-day it is a great naval base. Round its shores lies part of the German Fleet that is so long hidden. It was at the town of Emden I spent my first night as a small boy on German soil. It was in Borkum I learnt the German that stood me in such good stead in Brussels when working under the British Red Cross among German wounded."

* * * * *

After a very short rest at home, during which we revelled in each other's company, Leslie went down to Cambridge, where he joined the Officers' Training Corps. But the Brussels work had tried him physically, and so he came up to town and was ordered to a students' ward at the London Hospital, where two days later he was operated on. All the Red Cross people were ill.

He then became commissioned as a Gunner Subaltern and was sent into training with the 15th Division, Royal Field Artillery, at Frome, where many of his Cambridge friends had been training for three months. A strenuous period of drilling and field exercises ensued and a few months later I bade him farewell on his way into the maelstrom in France with his Battery. That keen, smart, wonderful, citizen-manned Battery—I wonder how many of them, if any, are still alive?

* * * * *

Action after action followed. I held my breath at times, but he always wrote cheerily.

Then on January 11th, 1916, after a few days' leave, fresh from the guns for the first time, Leslie and I breakfasted together. He came to me on his birthday, and on this day, his birthday, he left me early in the morning to go back to France.

We had tried to be very gay as his soldier's meat ticket allowed him a little extra, and had had people to dinner, and the last night ending with a party of his own particulars at the Savoy where they all danced afterwards.

As he was a slack young gentleman about letters, I carefully addressed a card to myself and as he left popped it in his pocket, saying: "You may not have time to write a letter, so just get this into some Field box to tell me you have landed."

While we were chatting, he laid upon the table a funny little black revolver.

"What is that?" was my question.

"My new revolver."

To my suggestion that he had one already, he replied:

"Yes, but it is such a heavy lumbering thing that I can't take it to the *observation trench*, and so I take nothing. You see, I go up every fourth day, with a telephonist, for a twenty-four hour spell, and as it takes two and a half hours—laden as we are with wires, food, water, and all sorts of things—to wend our way through the maze of trenches from six inches to three feet deep in water, we don't carry more than is necessary. At the trench itself I'm often so near the Boche that I can hear him talk, and we often hear the nightingales and cuckoos singing. The stupid tin periscope I'm using has seven holes in it, and though our Battery has had twenty-two losses already, we can't get a Ross for love or money. Supposing the Boche were to come over unexpectedly, I've nothing to hit back with—that's why I bought this little thing."

Half-an-hour later my boy was calling from the taxi "Au revoir, old lady," his dimples and smile still there as they were when he was a baby. "Take care of yourself. I've had a ripping time, thank you."

Those were his last words to me. His birthday smile repeated—his first, and now his last smile.

* * * * *

Six days later he was dead.

* * * * *

Yes, he was gone off to the Front again—coming from a Field Artillery trench and practically going back straight to

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.



I am quite well.

~~I have been admitted into hospital -~~
~~ick and am going on well.~~
~~unwounded and hope to be discharged soon.~~

~~I am being sent down to the lines~~

I have received your { letter dated _____
telegram _____
parcel " _____

Letter follows at first opportunity.

~~I have received no letter from you~~
~~hitherto~~
~~for a long time~~

Signature only. } *a.k.t.*

Date *27/9/15*

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card]

FIELD SERVICE
POST CARD

A.P.A. 2042
114 Gen. No. 3818.

The address only to be written on this side. If anything else is added, the post card will be destroyed.

*Mr Alec Tweedie
30 York Terrace
Harley Street
London W*

(11543) W: WS497-295 1.700m 475 M.R.Co. L-4

A Field Post Card sent after the Battle of Loos, Sept. 25th, 1915.

action—where he had spent six months, without any leave and almost incessantly under fire. Four days and nights of shelling he had undergone at Loos, and hard upon these followed another eight days and nights, within a mile of that battered town, spent right in the open, with shells falling everywhere.

On January 17th, six days after returning from his first leave to his Battery (the C. Battery, 72nd Brigade, 15th Division, R.F.A.), he was killed by a heavy German shell—killed instantly, thank God.

The same high explosive shell killed Leslie and the signaller on the spot, while his greatest friend, nicknamed "Widow" stood beside them untouched.

* * * * *

That card I addressed I received after he was killed, just as I received a wonderful letter of love and appreciation after he was dead which he had pinned on to his Will, written on the night he first left for Belgium in 1914. If ever woman was recompensed for the anxiety of bringing up a son, I was nobly recompensed. . . .

Almost his last words were still ringing in my ears: "We shall have victory the moment we get Conscription and munitions, and stop the supply of food now passing into Germany."

Those words from the boy seemed like a message from the grave . . . How long? How many more mothers must lose their sons while we "wait and see?"

A little bit of pleasure, a vast bit of pain, unceasing anxiety and endless worry intermingled with everlasting work; that is the mother's rôle. Baby illnesses, the education and launching of the boy, the inevitable strain and suffering of it all—and then, just when the rocks are passed and the boy is budding into manhood, when one looks for quieter, more peaceful days, the War Devil snatches the young life away. And so we older ones must wait on year after year for the end to come, hoping to leave the world a tiny bit better for our advent. But the bright young life has gone. The boy's merry laugh is dead.

* * * * *

Not until the Armistice did one realize in what a hell one had lived through the previous years, with two sons in the thick of it at the Front. All that time one had been rushing at the morning and evening papers, just as during the first three months of the War, when Leslie was more or less a prisoner in Belgium. Almost daily, one had walked down to the Club, had devoured every attainable scrap of news—and lived on wires. *Every* day without fail, for six or seven months, two papers had been posted to the boys. Also parcels of food and smokes and mufflers and games and pipes and sweets for their men had gone off *every* week. At least three times a week one had written to each of them, forwarding letters, sending cuttings and odd bits in the intervals, anything one could collect to interest and amuse them and their men.

Now at length the mother was idle. One boy lay buried in

the little British cemetery of Vermelles, where the shells were still falling fast and furious. The other son, after eighteen months' service—six at the Front with the 10th Royal Hussars and four at the Front with the Royal Flying Corps—was at home, quietly learning to be a pilot at Farnborough.

A lull had come. A great silence in one's life. The newspapers lay unopened for an hour, the feverish anxiety was over. One could realize now how great the strain had been, how terribly we parents must needs suffer for our country.

Hundreds of letters I received made reference to this suffering, and in almost every one—all kindly letters, all sympathetic, all helpful in some strange unfathomable way—that my bereavement called forth, there was one salient and predominant note: his friends' appreciation of the dear boy's wondrous cheerfulness.

"He was a ray of sunshine," they repeated again and again. "It did us good to hear his merry laugh."

If others feel his loss deeply, what of the mother with whom he had lived well-nigh a quarter of a century? For no boy—going as he did to Harrow, to Cambridge, to the London Hospital, as well as abroad to France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Russia—ever *lived* more at home. Indeed, he was never absent from his own home for long. He loved it. He loved every stick and stone, he knew the history of every curio. His home was part of himself.

* * * * *

There is an agony of grief that no one and nothing can mitigate. There is sorrow that can only be borne alone. A too kindly word brings tears, and tears only weaken and incapacitate the real powers of healing.

Agony and sorrow are beyond words, beyond expression. they grip one's vitals and tear one's heart, they almost stifle us; but—we must fight ourselves, and fight ourselves in loneliness of thought, until wisdom conquers grief, and work mitigates pain. When a person who has been a large part of our life, passes on, a great void is left, a hollow that must ache through years. It will not be filled or forgotten. Time covers it with a tender gauze of memory, but nothing fills it, nothing stills the silent pain. The archives of memory may lie dormant for a spell—but a flower, a colour, a scent, a sound will set the whole void throbbing with remembrance.

* * * * *

Why mourn for the dead?—they have merely passed on. Eighty per cent of deaths are in the nature of a happy release from suffering through age or poverty. The remaining twenty are those of the young who have not yet touched sorrow—and pass on full of the cream of life, its gall as yet untasted.

Why mourn?

Never preach what you dare not practise.

A black band denotes the death of a dear one; a Union Jack denotes our land. The two together are symbolical of the loss of manhood for king and country.

One dared to adopt these, and these only.

One friend applauded; a week later she was in the depths of black, because she lacked pluck and strength of conviction and followed the conventions. Others merely stared.

* * * * *

Many newspapers made kindly reference to my loss.

The following extract is from a letter sent to me by Leslie's Colonel:

"Personally, I have learned to value your son very highly; his uniform cheerfulness, his intelligent grasp of a subject, and his coolness under fire combined to make him a most useful officer, and I know the great sacrifice he made from a professional point of view, to serve his King and Country as a soldier."

* * * * *

Writing from Chipping Norton, in 1931, one of Leslie's best pals, Dr. Clem Russell "Widow," says:

"It was on a black winter's day when the Caius College Cambridge Scratch four were being rowed off. These races, I must explain, are renowned for their fun rather than their skill and any member of the College, whether he be a cricketer, footballer or a partaker of any other kind of sport joins his aquatic brother in these races. The boat in which Leslie was disporting himself, after a gallant effort by the crew and much good-natured barracking from the bank, slowly turned over, depositing its crew in the dark and icy waters of the Cam. I assisted a spluttering, and fairly abusive, but still very good-humoured fellow to the bank who turned out to be Leslie Kinloch Tweedie.

"I mention this small episode which led to our introduction as it helps to reveal something of Leslie's character. Always a sportsman, ever ready to take part in any pastime and to accept

defeat with a grace hard to beat. While up at Caius he concentrated his attention on football (soccer) and cricket, but always found time to play a fair amount of golf and tennis, but as I have already said, there was no sport to which he could not turn his hand. I can still see him, strolling through the College courts, sometimes with a cap and gown rolled up under his arm, always immaculately dressed but never overdressed; charming and debonair, a cheerful word for everyone, yet ever ready to sympathize with those in trouble.

"With these attributes, it is easy to understand that he was beloved by all, not only by men but by the fair sex. May week festivities, and such-like functions, always found him a host in himself and in great demand by all. College Porters, Gyps and Bedders still talk of 'our Mr. Tweedic', ever remembering the kindnesses he showed to them and to their families.

"Being Medical Students, Leslie and I betook ourselves to the London Hospital where he quickly established his name and signalized his appearance by immediately winning the Hospital Golf Cup. During the short time which elapsed between the time of coming down from Cambridge and the outbreak of war Leslie managed to combine work with pleasure to the highest degree; lectures, exams, sport, dinners, dances and theatres were interwoven together like a piece of mosaic. The outbreak of war found us on tiptoes for something to do and here for a short while we separated, Leslie going with a Red Cross Unit to Brussels while I, being more advanced, joined a medical unit at South Queensferry. It was not long before Leslie found himself virtually a prisoner of war, as that famous city of Brussels was occupied by the Germans soon after he and the Unit had arrived. Here again his general bonhomie stood him in good stead, and at Christmas, 1914, the Germans, for reasons best known to themselves, allowed this gallant little unit to return to England.

"By this time I had given up medicine and had attained a Commission in the R.F.A. and it was not long before Leslie followed in my wake and joined me at Bordon Camp, both of us being posted to the same battery.

"How I look back on those days; there were we—like hundreds of other young men—thrown together with a handful of men, none of us knowing anything about real soldiering, commanded by Regular Officers who could not understand the ignorance of the poor civilian, his lack of discipline and apparent

disregard of those in command. All this, of course, led to a certain amount of unpleasantness at times, but the final outcome of it all was a splendid fighting machine made up of men who were more than friends, were brothers. A small incident which occurred shortly before we were due to leave for France, always remains in my memory. Our Major sent for Leslie and me and addressing us as: 'Now then you two Warts,' both of us being Second Lieutenants with one star each, 'I don't know what you have been used to in civilian life but I will just tell you that I never have and do not intend to pig it while in France, and that I intend to live well whenever possible.' I looked at Leslie, and he at me, when we both burst out laughing, because if there was a thing we both loathed it was 'pigging it'. We both felt here was a man after our own heart.

"It is not the slightest use for me to say that Leslie enjoyed soldiering; he hated it, hated the filth, the horror, and the ugliness of it all, but did he show it?—never once. His upbringing and public school training had been too deeply implanted ever to allow a trace of his loathing to come to the surface. Beloved by all his men, he carried on as a true type of English Public School boy and when he met his death in the front line trench opposite Loos on January 16th, 1916, the day after returning from his first leave to England, the Battery Brigade, Division and Army lost a very lovable and gallant officer and gentleman.*

"We buried Leslie in the small cemetery at Vermelles near Loos, next the grave of the Prince of Wales' chauffeur.

"A few days after the funeral, it was my pleasure to meet Leslie's brother Harley, who had two days leave to come straight from the front line where his dismounted squadron (10th Hussars), had relieved Infantry and were holding that precarious line running from Hohenzollen Redoubt to Loos which had been so dearly bought in September, 1915. For it must be remembered that at that time we were so short of men that the Cavalry had to be dismounted and used as Infantry.

"All that I have written about Leslie might equally apply to Harley. What I saw of him proved him to be a replica of Leslie and as we all know, he also gave his life for his country's cause while flying on duty in Transjordan in 1926. They were both real sports."

* The writer of this was the one survivor of the three in that observation trench.

And here in conclusion are two charming letters from the Dean of Rochester, Headmaster of Harrow, in whose house Leslie lived. Dr. Wood wrote as follows :

"My dear Mrs. Tweedie,

"My heart is full of deepest sorrow and sympathy. You know how I loved your dear boy. I could not have loved him more if he had been my own child. He was one of the best and straightest of all my Harrow boys, and I mourn for our loss more than I can express. I, too, have lost one son, and another left us this morning for the front, so I know your sorrow and share it.

* * * * *

"The beautiful photograph has come, and will be a precious possession. Your dear boy was one of the most lovable characters I ever knew, and his memory is sacred to me, and will be so always.

"Yours very sincerely,

"JOSEPH WOOD."

CHAPTER X

GOOD MORNING, MR. POSTMAN

Can you make a policeman, or sell a Murillo?—The Drawback to being a scribbler—An average of Forty Letters a Day—Heartrending Appeals—Welcome Approval—A letter from Conan Doyle—Louis N. Parker's playful panegyric—Other Kind Friends—A Seaman in New York—A London Flower-seller—How the really great must suffer.

"CAN you make a man a policeman?" rather took my breath away. . . . What did he mean?

"My nephew is six foot three inches high, and just twenty, a good lad and a public school boy, but he simply cannot find a job for his head, so as he has a pretty hefty body, he thinks he might do as a policeman." (1932.)

The next letter says: "We want to sell a Murillo picture which has been in the family for over a hundred and fifty years. You know everybody, can you tell us how to set about it?"

Or again: "Can you find anyone to take our house?" And then follows all its virtues. . . .

One drawback to being a scribbler is the easy target one becomes for all sorts and conditions of letter-writers. I receive an average of twenty to forty letters a day. I have a wide circle of friends and it is pleasant to hear from them, to know what they are doing and to receive their kind remembrance.

If one's correspondence could stop at that, all would be well, but it doesn't. Every mail brings business letters, invitations to meetings of all sorts of Societies, financial tipsters' circular notes, claims for hospitals and charities, requests from budding authors for forewords, and last, but by no means numerically least, the great army of begging letter-writers. Some of the effusions from this last class are most plausible and ingenious.

People like Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller maintain large offices to deal with personal appeals. They have set aside definite sums in the hands of Committees which work on a definite plan and so the magnates are left in peace.

Some of these begging letters are from writers who say they



A Golden Vase at the Winter Palace, Peking

are down and out and that, having seen my name in the papers, they are throwing themselves on me for money. Others claim to have met me abroad and that now they have come home and are without employment they are turning to me for help. Some there are who lay on flattery with a trowel and at the end of the letter introduce a paragraph asking me to lend them sums of money. The profession of begging letter writing must be a paying one, or it would not flourish on such a wide scale as it does. It is also a fine art to set out heart-rending details of a struggle against misfortunes which the writer has conquered only to be thrown back again by ill health or deaths of relatives.

There are people who offer to go round the world with me—so kind of them, but I always travel alone—and offer to relieve me of all trouble *en route*; others who would like me to show them how to write books; some who say they feel sure I must know a certain eminent personage and would I send a card of introduction, and again others who tell me what they can do and would I be kind enough to secure them a post in this or that Society—and practically every one of these people is an entire stranger to me. There is always something wrong somewhere with anyone who writes asking for money. Here is a typical example from a man who calls at some tobacconist's shop for the replies to his letters:

"DEAR MRS. TWEEDIE,

"In better days when I was able to afford it, I bought your splendid books whenever they were published and I enjoyed reading them. Dear Madam, you must be wonderful to write like that. But nowadays I cannot afford such treats. Dire misfortune has dogged my steps. First my dear old mother dies of cancer in my house and my wife's health broke down nursing her, which meant more doctor's bills. Then I had the misfortune to get my leg broken and I lost my job. Since then we have had scarlet fever in the house. My heart is sick tramping all day for a job and oh, if you could only see the faces of my poor starved children when I return empty-handed to my cold and cheerless home. I simply must pay the rent or be evicted. Dear Madam, I must have £5, or I don't know what we will do. Have pity on me and if you send me £2 to go on with for the children's sake, I am sure I can get a job in another week. May God bless you in helping me. May you never know the agony I am going through."

What joy to help if it were really true ; but events proved the writer to be a retired clerk in no uncomfortable circumstances.

Then a well-known Museum asks for a copy of my old book, "Behind the Footlights", for the Ellen Terry Memorial Museum. After some weeks I procured a secondhand copy and sent it off to its destination. The book described many scenes about Ellen Terry, Sir Henry Irving, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and others and received many kindly notices from the Press, so I was glad to have a copy of it in such a fitting place.

Next I open a letter from a Rhondda Valley working miner who had won an election as a Conservative. It is concise and nicely expressed :

"DEAR MADAM,

"Please accept my sincere thanks for your kind letter of congratulations, and for the contribution of one pound towards my postage expenses.

"Yours sincerely,

" . . . "

I open a big package wondering what kind friend has been so good as to send me a gift, and out come two pictures accompanied by the following letter :

"DEAR MADAM,

"I do hope you will most kindly forgive me, but I am venturing to forward you a pair of my little sketches which I have priced at two pounds the pair, and to write and ask you if you would be so exceedingly kind as to help me by purchasing them off of me. I am very sorry to say I have lost my entire living as a clergyman through my failure to take my degree at Cambridge, and through my failure to pass the Bishop's exam., and of my subsequent nervous breakdown, the result of the apoplectic fit shortly after I heard the result of my failure to be ordained at Truro, and from which I have suffered ever since. As I studied Art for two years at the British Museum at Heatherley's School of Art before I tried to be ordained, and exhibited, at the R.A., and became the Secretary of the Sketching Club I have returned to painting in order to try and make a living. But I am grieved to say that Art is very different now to what it was years ago. I am fifty-two years of age and things are so bad with me that the only way in which I can make enough for a room to paint in and provide for my existence—although

I am unmarried—is by trying to dispose of my work by post. If you would like a reference I would gladly forward the highest, and I am enclosing 5d. stamps if I am not to dispose of them.

“However hoping you will be so very kind as to take into consideration the fact that I have lost my entire living as a clergyman and my sad distress,

“Believe me, . . .”

Subsequent inquiries showed the writer to be well known at the game and had settled down to this practice of selling pictures accompanied by tales of distress. Another writer offers me further excursions into the realm of Art :

“DEAR MADAM,

“Since seeing your admiration of London, I came to the conclusion that you are a great admirer and consequently I take the liberty to apply to you. First of all I have in my possession for disposal a very fine oil painting in handsome gold frame by H. Pickersgill, R.A. Also very important historical manuscripts entitled ‘Ode on the Royal Nuptials’. This is a complimentary document composed by Judge Kisbey (Trinity College, Dublin) to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on the celebration of his marriage dated 1862-1863. It also contains pages of fine prose to the late King Edward VII. If your ladyship would be so good as to entertain me personally, I should be most pleased to accept, but unfortunately I have not my own private address at the time. I therefore leave it to you if you would be so good as to write me on this matter. Pardon me for suggesting, but should you have any articles of clothing or old and up-to-date jewellery for exchange or anything else you deem to offer.

“I regret to state my financial position is rather precarious at the present time and I should be most grateful to receive a little assistance. I conclude now in anticipation of hearing from you.”

* * * * *

These appeals *ad misericordiam* are all couched in similar strain. I have quoted this one to put charitably-minded readers on their guard : as a rule it is the responsive recipient of the letter who is “let in”.

Here is one from a stranger near Hyde Park, and written in an educated lady’s handwriting.

"DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

"Please forgive me for troubling you, but I am in such a great difficulty, temporary—through a bad debt. My rates and taxes must be paid by twelve o'clock this morning, otherwise a distraint. Please lend me £9 to make up the amount and I will pay you back as quickly as I can and I shall be ever so grateful. I have a very nice Spanish writing-desk which I could make over as security and which I do not wish to part from. I will ring your telephone about 9 a.m. for an answer."

The writer was a total stranger who rang me up from a call office at 11 p.m. and again at 9 a.m. next morning.

Here is a more cheery request from a writer whom I could not remember, but he must have been decent or I would not have given him my address.

"MISTRESS,

"Do you remember a young priest you have meet in Italy at San Gimignano by Siena. I am the young priest and I come to ask you something that is not easy to ask. I must go to England to learn English and a great difficulty for me is that the pound is very high. I know you are very good and very rich and I dare ask you if you will not admit me for two or three weeks. A little room is good for me and I will been very little in your house. You see I am audacious. Please excuse me and accept my kind regards."

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By one post on a dull March day come requests for a *Sale and Market* at a Town Hall for poor ladies.

By the same post comes another request from a poor unfortunate Russian, who incidentally happens to be a Prince, to take guinea tickets for his concert in Belgrave Square in a house some kind soul has lent him for the occasion, and by the same another request, from Music Hall Artistes, enclosing two pink tickets at twelve and sixpence each for another concert.

Then came a letter on beautiful purple paper asking me to go and speak somewhere about something on a certain date, all practically unreadable, finishing up with a signature which was absolutely undecipherable. There was nothing to be done but to write to "My dear Madam—" and then cut her signature out and put it on the envelope.

This enclosing of tickets is to me the worst of all. If one tears them up and puts them in the waste-paper basket, one

is liable to be charged twenty-five shillings for not having returned them. Surely an imposition. If all the money spent on offices, secretaries, printer's stamps, etc., were put together, each Society would save nearly as much as it tries to earn by what amounts to a species of blackmail. All these weird unknown touts make one tired: it is a depressing kind of correspondence.

Apart from demands for money, there are also writers who try to make inroads on one's time. Here is one from an acquaintance abroad who writes:

"A friend of mine out here has just written a novel on the theme Science versus Religion. She is sending it in for the £1,000 Prize Competition in England. She asks me to ask if you will kindly read it for her and give your opinion and criticism. To me, it seems the book is likely to make quite a sensation, if it is not banned immediately. She is a clever scientist who came out from England because of a tragic love-affair. We went for a holiday together and only discovered in the train that each of us was writing a book. Please will you write a Preface for me."

I wrote the lady suggesting that she must imagine I have nothing to do, to think that I could read and godmother these two books, but I wished her all success.

A few extracts from some unknown correspondents may be amusing. "You can't have any religion because you praise Hindoos and Musulmen alike and say all religions are good. That is a bad wicked thing to say."

"I've just read 'Mainly East' and have been so enthralled in it—and in your wise *wide* Empire views and after-war problems. Should you find twenty minutes to spare, will you let me come and see you. I love your manner of writing and your gay 'tout de meme' way of looking at things that merely concern yourself."

My fair correspondent evidently thinks life is full of spare twenty minutes.

Another charming reader writes:

"I have just finished reading your book, 'An Adventurous Journey'. It was so interesting that I feel I want to tell you how much I enjoyed it. I wish the ignorant people in England, who are trying to drag our country down, could hear you speak about Russia.

"I had rather an unpleasant experience at the Lhama Temple in Peking, but was lucky to come through safely. One always runs these risks. Sightseeing alone is a risk. I am glad you came through it all, I hope, to write more for us.

"I hope you will forgive me and not think I have presumed too much in writing, simply because I want to thank you for your book."

Here is a short cheery note from two dear old American ladies. "Why, Mrs. Tweedie, our coming to London has just been a real success and pleasure, but most of all meeting you. You have been a real uplift."

Perhaps, after all, that is why I am left here. American women do that sort of thing nicely. Here is a picture postcard from two more of them: "DEAR MRS. TWEEDIE,

"Just a greeting from two Americans who miss you greatly."

Among the many requests I receive are such as the following from the Royal Scottish Geographical Society:

"DEAR MADAM,

"I am instructed by my Council to write and ask if you would be good enough to honour this Society by addressing it during the coming session on any subject that you may select based on your recent travels in China. My Council wishes me to assure you of a very hearty welcome to Scotland and trusts to receive a favourable reply to this invitation."

I wrote them saying I appreciated the honour, but had to refuse as in the case of dozens of the same kind invitations. I added that writing and painting were my two modes of expression, except for Broadcasting, in which case I was not paralysed by an audience.

A heartrending letter from an old Army officer says:

"Truly you are a friend indeed and I am unspeakably obliged to you. My pension is £40 a year. We are so low that I am in fact inquiring about some almshouses."

I quote this as it reveals a really sad state of affairs which is worth wider attention. Just fancy, an elderly, educated lady and gentleman living on £40 a year and the scraps they earn, contemplating an almshouse for shelter. People on the dole do far better than that. It seems a curse to be born of gentlefolk these days.

About the same time I got another letter of thanks:

"How can I ever thank you for your unremitting thoughts of me. I am deeply touched with the constant evidences of your friendship.

"One of your great qualities is that you can read hearts

and have such wonderful understanding. I bless you for your remembrance.

"Perhaps it may be permitted to me before I die to do something for you in return for the many, many things you have done for me." . . .

May I quote an interesting letter from Sir A. Conan Doyle, absorbed, as usual, in psychic phenomena :

"DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

"Part of the price I pay for my psychic work is that I practically have to cut out all social pleasure. My life is over full with what I regard as a duty, and so I fear I lose touch with friends unless they chance to be on the same psychic path as myself. In these days of the denial of survival, it is surely the most needful thing to which a man can devote his energies. Do you know much of psychic things? The Reverend A. Ford, who is a remarkable medium, is coming to us here on Monday. Would you care to come?

"Yours sincerely,

"A. CONAN DOYLE."

I thanked Sir Arthur for his kind invitation, but regretted my inability to be present on the date arranged. He wrote to me after the séance, saying :

"I am sorry, for your Father came to speak to you. The medium (Arthur Ford) had no idea who was coming, nor were the sitters told beforehand. So there was no chance of collusion. He said Tweedie (Harley?) was present. 'What about his daughter?' . . ."

What a pity for me that I am physically such a neophyte. Conan Doyle's enthusiasm for revelations of this nature made him one of the world's leaders on the subject. . . .

Just listen to this from "Several of my Lives" by my old friend, Louis N. Parker, Playwriter, Painter and Author, Director of so many wonderful Pageants :

"A new acquisition this year was Mrs. Alec-Tweedie. One of Mrs. Tweedie's charms is the charm of unexpectedness. No one knows where she will turn up next, or in what character. She has been all over the world. You have just met her in Bond Street, but you hear of her in Mexico. You have just lunched with her in her wonderful flat, and lo she sends you a postcard

from Tangier. She is eminent in every profession and distinguished in every art. She is a novelist, a writer of travel books, a biographer and an autobiographer, a journalist ; all these things, not in turn, but at the same time. She is an ideal hostess. Whenever she appears she brings the radiance of her beauty and of her magnificent optimism. And when you think you have exhausted the list of her talents, here is an entire Bond Street gallery full of her pictures. Has she toiled many years in a Paris studio ? Not she. She has grown weary of writing for the moment, so she has bought a box of colours and taken it to Siam or the frosty Caucasus, and in a month or two she has brought back all Siam or the frosty Caucasus blazing in her portfolio, just as she saw them through her vigilant eyes ; and here they are, turning Bond Street into Fairyland, and every one of them is marked in the right-hand bottom corner with the little red star which is every artist's delight. I should not be in the least surprised if the next time she emerges she brings home a complete symphonic poem, scored for a super-Straussian orchestra. Why not ? What is to stop her ? I defy all the powers of nature to prevent her doing anything she has a mind to. An amazing woman."

That was what he wrote when he had not seen me for fifteen years. The following is what he wrote after we met again :

"My short (it seemed short to me) visit yesterday shook me up quite severely ; it brought back to my memory so many good times due to you in pre-War and in War days. But it was a joy to see you looking so well—better than I had seen you for a long time—and in such lovely and appropriate surroundings.

"I don't know what I most admire in you ; your skill in all arts, your versatility, your universality, your philosophical outlook, your courage. The fact is that these qualities make up an incomparable whole which must be admired as a whole.

"I am dreadfully sorry to hear of your losses and bereavements, but the woman who has more friends than any other woman in the world must not speak of herself as being alone.

"How could you suppose I could write a book without speaking of you, who are one of my most joyous memories ?"

* * * * *

Everyone must have felt how difficult it is to write to some people and how easy to others. It is the person who receives the letter who really writes it, for to some one's thoughts flow

freely and smoothly as fast as the pen can carry them, while to others each sentence has to be thought out, at times with difficulty. . . .

The handwriting of to-day has steadily degenerated as anyone can readily note who may glance over the letters of our grandfathers. Modern life has too many other interests crowding in, one over the other, for people to settle down deliberately to indite an epistle. The business men of to-day rapidly speak their letters into a dictaphone, which gets hurled down through a tube to the typewriters' room, and they have rarely enough time even to sign their names legibly. In America the signature is typed in and so it does not matter how excruciatingly badly the Lord and Master scrawls his hasty signature. We have lost the pompous style of Dr. Johnson's time and now write more concisely. Typewriting is a splendid advance, but wherever non-business letters are concerned handwriting is much more soulful and personal, though I cannot read my own.

How contrary we all are. I would not be without my letter-box for anything, and yet there are times when I would equally give anything to escape it.

* * * * *

Oh, that postman's knock. I wonder does he ever have any idea, when he airily plays his rat-a-tat-tat on the door and thrusts in all the letters, what joys and sorrows, what pains and pleasures he is bringing me? I wonder.

Here are some more people who have sweetly referred to me in their books. Perhaps I ought not to quote them—but isn't this book called "ME"?

Hannay in his *Diary* ;

de Windt in his "Finland" ;

Dr. Muspratt in his "My Life" ;

M. D. Conway in his "Lives" ;

Richard Whiteing in "The Life of Genevieve Ward" ;

Mrs. Lynn Lynton, Basil Tozer, and W. Q. Orchardson.

It may sound vain to quote them, and it certainly makes me feel old, but "the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." And I am delighted to feel that not all the good will be interred with my bones, for these dear friends have perpetuated my name and written it, yes, and embellished it in their tablets of memory.

They would not have referred to me unless they had had

friendly feelings towards me and what an encouragement that is when bereavements of kith and kin, one after the other, have made me feel like a spar thrown up on the beach and that life is scarcely worth living. But my letter-box shows me that compared with so many others I am rich and can bask with comfort in the glowing fire of friendship.

* * * * *

Begging letters, as I have said, are perfectly ceaseless.

Here is another specimen of what Mr. Postman drops into my box. It is from some kind of a seaman docked in New York :

"DEAR MADAM,

"Being a reader of your book, 'Hyde Park', and a British Seaman, who wishes things to be bettered in England, may I pass a little comment on your edition of above? In the first place, anyone with common-sense can see, you try to impress on the reader what good times we are living in at present. They may be compared with the Olden Days, but not half as good as they could be with different management.

"One can easily gather from the pages you are Conservative, and your reference to the Labour Party with regard to the Unemployment Problem is nothing to do with 'Hyde Park'.

"But to refer to that. In my opinion the unemployed figures would have increased quite as much, had the Conservatives been in power, and as it is, the blame can only be put down to the fact that the owners and employers of labour in England will not give their support to the Labour Government in the problem. The Conservative and Liberal Parties seem to regard it as fatal to recognize the Labour Party's point of view, and so one against the other all the time, things cannot improve.

"The slums of London and other cities in Britain. Horrible. Only to those who have seen them. God never put vast multitudes of people on this earth to be in dire want of the necessities of life. People and children with only rags to their feet and body, and half-starved. Not their fault. Most of the criminals come from these depths. Why? Because in the beginning they were not taught the evils of this life or the way to be good. Again, most of the geniuses spring from these depths, and probably there are still many more who will never get a chance to rise above the level. It is all unfair. Am enclosing a short story as an example of what can happen in the present way life is carried out. It is up to man to alter it for the good of the

majority. There will always be these tragedies of life and unfairness carried on until everything is State controlled. Then things will automatically right themselves, and the geniuses will be discovered and cultivated for the country's good and prosperity. Another thing, there should be a national school for all children, rich or poor. Why should one man's son go to a special college or university, and those that can't afford it be content with a council school training and no hopes of going to an elementary school for further training, into a trade or profession? You may say, because one boy's father worked hard to pay for his son's education. But why, I ask, should the children suffer because *their* father could *not* afford it? One poor boy has to struggle through life to make ends meet, working in an unskilled trade, and others such as undergraduates at the universities just roll through life easily, their future planned for them, because they possess money. No. There is a law for the rich and a law for the poor in England. It is just about time it was altered. There is no doubt that the finest thing which could happen to Britain, and what some of the most foremost thinkers predict will eventually happen, and that is 'Communism'. That magic word will solve all the difficulties, the unemployment problem and many others. How much longer before the people realize this? Then things will be altered for the benefit of mankind in the whole. Oh, hurry up, evolution, or—Revolution. With thanks,

"I remain,

"A PATRIOTIC ENGLISHMAN"

"P.S. I might add that England would be more impregnable as well, and if every country adopted the same thing war would be forgotten."

* * * * *

We had been speaking, a sick friend of mine and I, of the cheery friendship of a canary, and she had told me how she longed for one each day of the eighteen months she had spent in bed. So I wrote and offered her the loan of mine to see how she liked it, poor soul. Here is her charming and, to me, pathetic reply:

"I think your offer is *too* noble—but Sister thinks it would be better not to have the loan of the little bird. She is always afraid of canaries or birds in Nursing Homes, as the atmosphere never seems to suit them. One little canary (which came with a patient) died and they had great difficulty in saving the life of a beloved parrot.

"I would never get over it if anything happened to one of yours—but I do think it so *very* kind of you to have suggested it. I must content myself with watching the doves in the tree. Many, many thanks for the kind offer."

* * * * *

A few hours later Mr. Postman brought a charming expression of appreciation from an old friend for some little entertainment that I have now quite forgotten :

"I did so enjoy my day with you—it is extraordinary in an ordinary run of life how few people can rise above 'babies and servants' in their conversation, and I felt as if I had had a 'really truly' holiday."

Here is another note of the kind it does one good to receive :

"I suppose it's no good asking how you are. 'Alright' will be the answer—even when you are worn to a frazzle. The seed has fallen on good ground as all your 'blowings up', etc., do. Now don't smile. I love it when you go for me and tell me what to do and not do."

* * * * *

Well, I never—he must refer to my visit to one of my huts. Of course, I don't remember the man.

"DEAR MRS. TWEEDIE,

"I am taking this opportunity to write and ask you if you know of any Vacant Post or any employment. I expect you will have forgotten me, but I had the pleasure of meeting you when an Officer during your visit to Amiens in 1918. You were kind enough to say if at any time you could do anything for me, you would be glad to do so."

I've never said that to anyone in my life, so that finishes him.

"I know it is some time since the War, but I can get excellent references as regards my character.

"Hoping you are able to introduce me to something when I should be glad if you will grant me an interview at your convenience. . . ."

* * * * *

Kindly interest in my life is never lacking—and how much a person living quite alone appreciates it, only that lonely mortal knows.

"You should lie up for a few days," a friend writes. "*Don't*

say 'What does it matter'? It matters a lot and you don't appreciate how many people are fond of you and mean it from their hearts. I am so tied to this house at present, but just wait until I get my flat and then you will find that I *will* know if you are ill or tired and be able to take care of you a little. But do take care of yourself—you always neglect your own health to look after other people's." . . .

What a pie-jaw from the dear thing. And yet somehow these little personal interests in one's well-being do help to smooth the rough bits of one's life. That is why, although I never find time to make an odd social call, I make time to call and sit long if necessary with the halt, the lame and the blind, and always find leisure to go to nursing homes and tell the patients ridiculous little stories that amuse them and give them something to think about afterwards. Never, never do I let them talk of their illness or their operations for one moment, and frankly say so.

* * * * *

Another inspiring little letter. How one's good or evil deeds follow one.

"I don't think you realize how great a sacrifice it is to anyone like me to give up smoking. However, if it's the only way I can see you I will promise I won't touch a cigarette for *three months*. There is my promise and you know if I say it I mean it.

"Now when will you come?"

The poor soul was nearly dead from nicotine poisoning, and so, to break her of the smoking habit, I was brutal to her and said I would never see her again unless she stopped smoking.

Months later another letter came with proof beyond doubt that my admonitions had been successful.

"I haven't had a single cigarette and when I feel miserable about it I get out that telegram you sent me and I feel better for reading it." . . .

It is often just the friendly inspiration that helps one over the water-jump.

* * * * *

A London correspondent writes this pretty little tribute:

"Mrs. Alec, dear, how *can* I thank you, you are too wonderfully good to me. I felt like weeping when I read your note, for it is the extra bits that are so difficult, and you have smoothed it all away, your heart is as big as your reputation."

The lines that she added as a postscript may hearten other travellers along Life's often rocky and difficult road, so here they are :

When all our hopes are gone,
'Tis well our hands must still keep toiling on
For others' sake ;
For strength to bear is found in duty done,
And he is blest indeed who learns to make
The joy of others cure his own heartache.

By the very same post comes another from a great overseas railway, to whom my name is totally unknown for they offer to chaperone me round London.

"DEAR MADAM,

"We observe that you are at present on a visit to this country, and have very much pleasure in inviting you to make use of our Office during your stay in London."

They enclose bus routes, air routes, telegraph systems.

Here is a letter from India from an Education Inspector. Apparently almost a stranger and yet dwelling on a couple of interesting facts connected with the books and the pictures.

"DEAR MRS TWEEDIE,

"When up at Ranikhet I met an Air Force officer who in the course of our conversation mentioned the death of your son, and altho' our walks in life lie far apart I feel you will not think me presumptuous if I venture to send you my sincere sympathy. I know how bravely you bore the loss of your younger son, and how nobly you gave your life in service for others, and though conscious that any words of mine are inadequate to give real support, yet I *do* ask that you may be strengthened by the source of all love and comfort in your sorrow.

"I have greatly enjoyed my short period of life and work again in my beloved India. And it will be a *big* wrench to tear away from it.

"I have found your books in most of the various Club libraries of late. I noticed a photo of Col. O'Meara and myself with our feet dangling over the sides of an 'ekka' going through the river near Agra, in 'Mainly East'. I've seen lots of sketches and paintings lately by people out here on tour, but *none* so truly and vividly '*India*' as yours. . . ."

This appreciation of my colouring and grip of India is in keeping with Lord Allenby's treasured praise in a letter in 1924

in which he wrote: "You have more the spirit and colour of Egypt than anyone I have ever known."

A letter comes next from a Scoutmaster of a favourite village in Buckinghamshire, where I had left on Armistice Day a supply of apples and buns in memory of my two boys who were closely associated with the lovely spot and played cricket and football on the village green. . . .

A woman writer writes in these inspiring terms from a great woman's club.:

"Please forgive delay in thanking you from my heart for your helpful courtesy—*always* you inspire and inculcate strength.

"The kind thought which prompted the gift of your 'Tweedieisms' means much to me, and I am using several of the pars. in my book, with, of course, an acknowledgment of the gracious authoress.

"I have been most wonderfully honoured, and from many countries, and took my MS. to the publishers yesterday.

"Hence delay in acknowledging your gift. I *do* appreciate the honour."

* * * * *

Here, from Sir William Soulsby, is a little note which pleased me. I had written to him on his retirement from the Secretaryship to the Lord Mayors after fifty years' perpetual service in their behalf, and here is his chivalrous reply:

"The Mansion House,

"March 16th, 1931.

"DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

"Many thanks for your nice kind, friendly letter. Of all the two hundred I have received, yours is the smartest and tersest and I envy the felicity of your style.

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM SOULSBY."

* * * * *

And Colonel Bailey, secretary of the Kipling Society, sends a request to read a paper before the Society, a request that had to be declined with regret as I have given up all public speaking.

Then comes a request to give a number of lectures on Persian Art during the holding of the International Exhibition at the

Royal Academy in 1931. This request I had also unfortunately to decline for the same reasons given to the Kipling Society.

* * * * *

What on earth is one to think of a closely-written sixteen-page letter from a total stranger, announcing his wonderful virtues and great capabilities, and the cruelty of a world, and then asking to borrow a hundred pounds from a total stranger?

Really the mail-bag of a person a little bit known as I am is absolutely appalling. What it must be to the really great makes me shudder to think.

This particular rigmarole was beautifully written. It must have taken hours to do. I did not read it. I merely glanced at a page or two and sent it on to that wonderful body, the Charity Organization Society, which does such good work in trying to stop the brutes who live by writing begging letters and, alas, making money thereby.

Then, to show the diversity of the post-bag, out tumbled another letter from charming Miss Gladys Potts, O.B.E., the head of Northwood College, who wishes to know if I will go down to give the prizes and say a few words on their breaking-up day. I didn't say a few words, but I took down a few sketches for the girls to see and received the following charming little note:

"Thank you so much for showing us your pictures last Sunday, and for telling us so many interesting things about them. It was very kind of you, and we appreciated it immensely.

"We all hope that you will come again one day, and show us some more.

"Yours very sincerely,
"The Senior Boarders."

* * * * *

Here come some letters of yet another kind. Will I lend my room—about once a week, like lectures once a week? No, no, no.

"Now comes the crux of the whole matter. Would you be feeling willing to help us by having the meeting at your flat? That would indeed be a great feather in our cap and invaluable help. I know it is asking a great deal, but I think the—is worth it. Please forgive my asking such a big thing. . . ."

Really, this question of lending the room has haunted me for five years and I think has been mentioned somewhere else,

but still they come, playwrights, poets, bridge tournaments, cocktail parties, dances, and all the rest of them, evidently thinking I prefer to live out of my rooms instead of in them.

"We are doing a play. Can you lend us Russian costumes?"

Almost a stranger writes :

"Dare I ask, is it possible you can and will present me at Court this year? If so, the honour will be deeply appreciated. I believe you realize—for years—I have set you on a pedestal above all women. [Is that any reason why I should present a stranger at Court?] To avoid giving trouble, I will phone you on Saturday morning about 10 a.m. Forgive me, please, for not asking earlier if you could grant this honour, and please believe if you will grant it I shall prove worthy. I have a long honourable line of ancestors on both sides."

* * * * *

It's a great privilege to be able to do a few simple kindnesses to people. A letter taken from a Christmas bundle says :

"Very best thanks for all you have done for me. I picture you helping some lame dog over the stile as usual. How much you mean to so many of us."

"I just cannot adequately thank you for your kind gift. It is most helpful. Further, you have done so much in this way that I can never repay, except by gratitude. I do, indeed, hope that you spend 'A Happy Xmas' and New Year in 1932. Altho' with your brain and energy, I do think you tend to wear yourself out.

"Yours gratefully . . ."

Dear things. I'm proud to have been of any use; just as I'm proud to have been rung up on Xmas morning from the country and told: "I am thinking of you, dear, and this is just to wish you the Season's Greetings and to wish you were with us." How kind and how sympathetic. Moral support is helpful.

A friend who was abroad several times with me in Europe writes at Xmas, '31:

"DEAREST MRS. ALEC,

"Another Xmas, and with it all the most heartfelt wishes for a peaceful one—it seems to have flown (this year) quicker than ever and the part that stands out most vividly in my mind was our really lovely happy time at Monte Carlo. I'm

sure it was a wonderful holiday for me, and one of the most delightful. I shall always think of my extraordinary good fortune in your choice of a companion. The only drawback is I am such a duffer in not sparing you any of the worries of the journeys, etc. It is really your fault for being so efficient."

From another batch :

"MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

"Madam, I am extremely Sorry for taking the liberty of writing to you, But I am a flower seller in the Streets and knew you when you was at Whitehall Court in 1923. I am So Sorry to tell you, Madam, that a couple of weeks ago I went into a food shop to have a cup of tea as it was very cold and I left my basket and flowers outside the shop as the owners of the shop will not let me take it inside, and after I had had my cup of tea I came out of the shop and found somebody had gone and stolen the lot which has deprived me of getting my living. I am an Ex-service man which you can see by the enclosed which I trust, Madam, you will return to me, please. So, Mrs. Alec, I should esteem it a very great kindness if you could lend me £1 so that I can go to market and get a new basket and stock and I will pay it back to you as soon as possible without fail.

"I am, Madam,

"Your humble and obedient servant,

"—

"Battersea.

"P.S. Madam, I am not supposed to send this certificate to you, only it is very urgent." Reply :

"DEAR SIR,

"Mrs. Tweedie wishes me to say that it is now eight years since she left Whitehall Court, and she does not remember your name at all. She advises you to apply to the Salvation Army at 38, High Road, S.W.12, or the Charity Organization Society, 22, Cambridge Road, S.W.11, either of whom might help you.

"I am enclosing your Army Discharge in this registered letter.

"Yours truly,

"Secretary."

What a fool they must take me for. A mechanical engineer calmly writes to me, a total stranger, and says :

"DEAR MADAM,

"The Admiralty have approached me with respect to the making of my Patent" (which he proceeds to describe).

"To facilitate the development of this new and important Unit, I have need for further capital.

"The security I offer for this consists of a complete block of Freehold Property situate in the centre of the Town of —, consisting of Dwelling Houses, Shops, Offices, and the works at the rear where the Engines are being made.

"The nett rental of this block is £420.0.0. per annum. It was built . . . by the best builder in the town and is kept in the best condition. All premises are let and never vacant.

"I will be glad to know if you feel disposed to help me in this matter, as the Engines will form a very important item in the shipping world" (he proceeds to dwell on their possibilities).

"Any reference you may require concerning my character may be procured from any Magistrate or Minister or business person or Solicitor in the town of —, as I have lived all my life in the town, and practically in the same place in the block of property under review, except during the War, when of course I was otherwise engaged. My age is fifty.

"Accept my thanks for your kind consideration of my letter, and should you wish an interview I will come over any day you may wish. . . ."

I've had many quaint letters from all kinds of strange people, but I've never been asked about a dog before :

"DEAR MADAM,

"I hope you will forgive the liberty I take in writing to you, but I have always wanted to ask you a question, but not knowing your address, could not do so. But I see by the paper that you are now staying in Bath, so I thought to myself : 'Here is the opportunity.' I only want to ask you if 'Pompey', the dog to whom was raised a monument, was your own dog, or perhaps he belonged to another part of your family. I love dogs so dearly that I am always wanting to know everything about any particular dog, and I am sure, were Lord Byron living, I should ask all particulars from him re Boatswain.

"Yours truly,

" . . . "

Who can say a writer's post-bag is not a miscellaneous medley.

* * * * *

What sort of shirts should Tommy take to Sumatra?

Is the sun helmet necessary for Cairo?

Could darling Mary find a secretarial job in Shanghai and could you give her introductions if she went out?

Or a man writes: "I'm a terrific smoker. Do you think I can get — tobacco in Ceylon, or had I better arrange for it to come regularly from here?"

What do you do for mosquitoes? Nothing—mosquitoes generally do for me.

CHAPTER XI

MEMORIES OF THE WAR

Those Days of Rations—"Awfully grand with a fowl" when my Boys were home—The joy of a pot of jam—The Zepps—No lights—God Bless Jack Tar—My teas for soldiers—The Y.M.C.A. and my Hut scheme—Short-sighted men, go-ahead women—The War change—A metamorphosis—My offer to Kitchener—Women started training—Munition work—The Women's Army—An American's admiration—The Y.M.C.A. booklet—A Batch of letters—My principal Y.M.C.A. Huts—My Y.M.C.A. Passport—Prince and Princess Arthur of Connaught—Our soldiers on the Rhine—The Press—H.R.H. makes an omelette—General Thwaite's prophecy.

HOW completely one has forgotten the days of rations. Days without butter or sugar or meat, days largely of potatoes and horrible bread. We civilians only had a pound of meat ration a week and two ounces of butter.

When my boys were home they got soldiers' rations and we were awfully grand with a fowl or a couple of pound "joint" of meat. A pot of jam was another joy. Nobody grumbled, but this old country had four years of pretty stiff rationing. Hence many men friends on duty were so proud of getting something "extra" that they would invite themselves to a meal if Charlotte would cook their "extra special" for them. What funny little parties those were, and how we smacked our lips over some perfectly simple thing.

Reading a letter from one of my sons from the Front I am reminded of those strange days of Zeppelin raids.

He says: "We can hardly imagine dear old London in darkness and the war of Zepps overhead. What brilliant people these Germans are. I can hear them talking about thirty feet away at this moment. Good chaps and clever. What a beastly thing war is. Take care of yourself and don't go standing about looking at Zepps." (First raid January, 1915).

It was just exactly what I was doing. I watched every Zepp raid in London with the greatest interest. After a while we got the sign sent through from the coast, but the first came as a surprise. Sir William and Lady Simpson, my next-door neighbours in 1915, and I, stood on our doorsteps in York Terrace

and saw and heard the Zepps pass over. Little did any of us realize we should each lose a son later in the Air. When I moved from the big house, with its empty rooms (sons away at the War—and servants off making munitions), to a service flat in Whitehall in June, 1916, I saw much more of the Zepps. The Thames was their chart, the glinting water their guide, and the neighbourhood their goal. Few reached London; they were shot down, or had to turn tail *en route*, and those which arrived hardly did any damage at all. Not one single big building was hurt, and nothing was demolished. But we lived in dark streets and a lot of people took refuge in cellars or the Underground stations and our lives were a bit upset for the first two or three visits. Then no one cared and we all went our ways. My secretary for seven years, who married an Australian officer, returned on a visit to London lately and assured us that during the worst air raid she found me making pastry. I dare say it is true, for I always "carried on", and I was learning how to cook, for I'm ashamed to say I never learnt to cook till war days when we had very little to cook and had to be most careful. Potatoes were my chief fare. The ridiculous pound of meat and two ounces of butter a week I let dear old Charlotte, the maid, enjoy, and I got on splendidly with dishes of potatoes, just plain boiled potatoes. Milk, butter or meat were not there to disguise or embellish the dear old potatoes.

It was horrible never to have any lights in passages or streets. Strict economy and wisdom reduced us to the lowest possible illumination. But to me one of the greatest horrors of it all was the daily arrival of hundreds of sick and wounded at my very door near Charing Cross, with long lines of ambulances waiting for the poor fellows. Never did I go in or out without seeing ambulances and blue-costumed men. My God, war was terrible—and it left a scourge behind which fourteen years has not obliterated. Great Britain was war-weary.

It is the sailor who never went to sea who criticizes the Navy most severely; the real salt knows his job and quietly does it. *Silence is golden*, they say, and with the Navy *Action without words* makes Great Britain invulnerable and kept the wide oceans free during four years of the greatest war in history. The small middy or the able-bodied seaman can each do his bit to forge the chain of success as well as an admiral. Age has nothing to do with success.

Opportunity, like time, passes never to return. The Navy

seizes the first and plays skittles with the second. Great Britain and the Navy are one, welded together in a great Imperial crucible, of strength, wealth, honour, valour, and brave deeds silently performed.

National success is achieved by individual effort.

Every sailor is owed a kindly thought and good wish by every land-lubber. God bless Jack Tar and may his shadow never grow less.

Towards the end of the War, when American soldiers and sailors came over, a large number of them were constantly in London either on their way to France or on leave. Mindful of much hospitality I had received in the United States, I set myself to show these "Doughboys" as much friendliness as I could. Every Sunday a big party of them came to my flat at Whitehall Court, 100 at a time, totalling over 3,000 men.

Restricted rationing made afternoon-tea, which is normally an easy function, rather difficult, but they all managed to get some refreshment and for the rest there was never any stint of entertainment. One Sunday I recall there were 130 soldiers and sailors, and I had no less than thirty helpers who willingly gave their services. My dear friend, Genevieve Ward, herself an American, was indefatigable in her efforts to entertain. Percy French, the "lightning artist", earned rounds of applause, and among many others of equal repute Pauline Russell, then one of the stars in *Chu Chin Chow*, Renée Meyer, the pretty young Drury Lane actress, Susan Strong, the sweet singer, all won great favour and roused the men to enthusiastic appreciation. My guests were sent me through the medium of the Y.M.C.A., for whom I had by that time collected so much money, books, pianos, gramophones, billiard tables, etc. They early recorded gratefully the total number in a specially printed leaflet and on a form of letter-paper which they prepared for my use. I reproduce a copy of both on the following page.

* * * * *

Men are dear delightful people ; but they don't always see very far ahead.

Women are really pretty go-ahead creatures on the whole especially in war time, and we fretted, held for months and months so tightly on the curb by Lord Kitchener, Mr. Lloyd George, the Food Controllers, and a host more.

However, let us be thankful for the mercies that were so graciously and tardily vouchsafed to us women as a sex.

Mrs. ALEC-TWEEDIE'S HUT SCHEME (Y.M.C.A.)

2, WHITEHALL COURT, LONDON, S.W.1.

Collected within two months of the commencement of War.

125,000 BOOKS
130 PIANOS
100 BILLIARD TABLES
ENDLESS NUMBER OF GRAMOPHONES
BAGATELLES
TABLES & CHAIRS

During the first three months about £11,000 was collected and a large number of Huts were provided.

The Navy Hut	Harwich	St. Marylebone Hut	Shakespeare
"T. R. Marshall" Hut	Waterloo	Penrhyndeudreath	P.D.
Torquay & District Hut	Salisbury	Silsden & District Hut	France
South Devon Hut	France	East Boldre Hut	Boldre
Ulverston & District Hut	France	Langdon Point Hut	near Dover
Kensington Hut	Shakespeare	Broughton Vale & District Hut	Chapel St. Leonards
Graham Hut	France	Exmouth & Helston	Mullion
Chester & District Hut	Egypt	Westminster Hut	London
Romford & District Hut	France	Accrington Hut	France
Woking & District Hut		Guiseley Hut	France
Lymm & District Hut		Middlewich Hut	
		Wareham Hut	
		Leslie Tweedie Memorial Lounge	Shakespeare
		And others since.	

LIST OF PATRONS:

His Excellency the French Ambassador (Monsieur Cambon).
His Excellency the American Ambassador (Dr. Page).
His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador (The Marquis Inouye).
His Excellency the Belgian Minister (Baron Moncheur).
His Excellency the Serbian Minister (Mons. Boshkovitch).
The Lord Chancellor.
The Duke of Buccleuch (Chairman of the Navy League).
The Duchess of Marlborough.
Millicent Duchess of Sutherland.
Rt. Hon. the Earl of Clarendon.
The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Meath, P.C.
Rt. Hon. Viscount Cowdray.
The Hon. Lord Kinnaird, D.L., J.P. (Chairman, Y.M.C.A.).
The Bishop of Birmingham, D.D.
The Dean of Manchester, D.D.
The Lord Chief Justice (Rt. Hon. Viscount Reading, G.C.B.).
The Lord Mayor of London.
Field-Marshal Viscount French (Commander-in-Chief).
Rt. Hon. Lord Aberconway, K.C.
Rt. Hon. Arthur J. Balfour.
Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Clarke, P.C., K.C.
Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Carson, P.C., K.C., LL.D.
Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George.
The Rt. Hon. Bonar Law, M.P.
Rt. Hon. Sir George Reid, M.P. (Late High Commissioner for Australia).

Prof. Sir William Crookes O.M., F.R.S.
Sir Archibald Geikie, O.M., F.R.S.
Admiral Lord Beresford, G.C.B.
Admiral Sir John Jellicoe.
Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, G.C.B.
Admiral Sir James Bruce, K.C.M.G.
Admiral Sir Percy Scott, K.C.B.
Sir Philip Watts, F.R.S.
Gen. Sir Bindon Blood, G.C.B.
Gen. Brancher, R.F.C.
Surg.-Gen. Sir David Bruce, C.B., F.R.S.
Gen. Sir George Bullock (Governor of Bermuda).
Lieut.-Gen. Sir W. Fitzcarrin Campbell (Commander-in-Chief, Western Command).
Gen. Sir David Henderson (Air Board).
Gen. Sir Francis Lloyd, K.C.B. (London District).
Gen. Sir Nevil Macready, K.C.B.
Gen. Sir Henry MacKinnon, K.C.B.
Gen. Sir Charles C. Monro, K.C.B. (Commander-in-Chief in India).
Gen. Sir William Robertson, K.C.B. (Chief of the Imperial Staff).
Major-Gen. Harold Tagart, C.B.
Col. Sir Edward Ward, K.C.V.O., K.C.B.
Major Darwin.
Lord Burnham (Chairman "Daily Telegraph").
John Walter, Esq. (Chairman of "The Times").
Sir Ernest Waterlow, R.A.
W. Joynson Hicks, Esq., M.P.
Sir George Younger, M.P.

Women—soldiers. Yes. Men have become fighters, and women have become soldiers. We may fairly juxtapose them ; for where would the fighters have been for over four years but for the women soldiers ?

Not only did women, to start with, give them birth—and that is an achievement outside man's power (worse luck)—but they heartened and spurred them on to work from the moment war broke out. There was no shrinking. The boys whose rearing had cost these women long years of toil and anxiety, and who had just reached the age for repayment by comradeship and sympathy for such labour, were yielded up with a heart-pang and a face-smile. And having thus surrendered their own blood to the country, the women turned to see what could be done at home in the same cause with female brain and body.

"Nothing," said the public voice. "Woman has her sphere ; let her stick to that limited terrain." Yet, all the same, women ceased going to tea-parties and buying new hats, and boldly stepped into men's shoes, and did not find them pinch.

Women as non-combatant soldiers ? "Ridiculous," said the great Lord Kitchener to the writer in 1914—though, had he been spared to a grateful nation, so great a man would surely have recognized the magnificent work done by women. Three years later, however, wide-awake General Sir Nevill Macready—but we shall come to the Women's Army in due course. And who knows that before long we may have to have women fighters too ?

Women on public war committees, as munition makers, army chauffeurs, and so forth. "Absurd," cried a chorus of wise-aces. Yet here again mere men blundered. For, in a word, the War was to metamorphose everything and everybody.

In 1917 every man was a soldier, and every woman was a man. Well, no—not quite ; but, speaking roughly, war turned the world upside down ; and the upshot of the topsy-turvydom was that the world discovered women, and women found themselves. A new world was created.

In early war days someone suggested women army-cooks.

"Oh, nonsense," replied the Army. "How could any woman cook for hundreds ? She can barely cook one leg of mutton, let alone fifty."

And so the waste of good food and badly-cooked rations went on for months and months, and we taxpayers paid the bills, and poor Tommy's tummy suffered the pains. But one



Women's Congress. This appeared in *The Onlooker* after an article by Mrs. Aleo-Tweedie called *Women and Work* in the . . . *The Fortnightly*, 1912.
 X The Author at work.

day the Army rebelled, and the Army also had to be increased, and so humble Mrs. Cook who had been scorned and spurned was called forth, when lo, down went the bills, and up went the quality of the cooking. Tommy's tummy was at ease, and Tommy's temper improved. Saving enormous—in waste and curses.

Women cooks did it.

The metamorphosis evolved gradually as the bellicose atmosphere thickened, and Britain's quasi-realization of the War merged into a mighty resolve to put it through at all costs, by the work of all classes and both sexes. At length it became drastic and embracing enough to alter not only the heart of things, but their outward aspect. And no one—not even Cabinet Ministers or Brass Hats—must mind being chaffed over the process of evolution.

To realize the change, let us take a passing peep at a familiar corner of our everyday London—that which lay under the shadow of Charing Cross Station.

Where were the green gardens that lined the riverside?

They were gone, submerged by a mushroom growth of drab Government hutments, a veritable village within whose wooden walls, or in majestic hotels near by, were toiling a hive of tens of thousands of women clerks. When evening came, these, with a dozen still greater Government-office hives, emptied their busy bees into the streets. Whitehall, Northumberland Avenue and the Strand, were, with their dense, quick-moving throngs of women, like rivers in spate. These were the war workers from Admiralty, War Office, Munitions Department, Food, Education, Forestry, Board of Trade, and so forth. Thousands, tens of thousands of women of all ages and styles there were, so that one knocked up against postwomen, window-cleaning women, and brain workers of a dozen species. . . .

Up to 1914 heaps of them had been at school or college; at golf, tennis, or in the hunting-field. The war cloud came, thickened into an inky nimbus—and lo, the schoolgirls were wage-earning women, the airy suburban tennis-players strenuous desk-chained clerks. And even before the poorer classes had become super wage-earners, the richer classes were quickly toiling all unpaid in hospitals and canteens. Just as the sons of great families were among the first to go to France, so the daughters, aye, and the mothers and grandmothers of great families were among the first to work with brain and hands for

Great Britain's glory. How those who derided the *idle rich* must feel ashamed of their unjust, heartless aphorisms.

A metamorphosis indeed—with implications. For it meant that the nation, in getting a grip on its job, had also grasped the value of women as an asset for the same. Countless other districts, too, not merely in London, but in every big town—even in new-built towns compact of workshops and factories—were soon putting brain and muscle and sweat of brow into the Great Endeavour.

As this converging throng surged into the stations moreover, it received tickets from a blue-uniformed woman, and were passed on to the platform by another woman, and the railway porter was apt to be a female also with badges and belts. If any chance male item of the crowd stepped into tram or bus, he would still be under petticoat rule; a female conductor punched his ticket, while many occupants of the seats were khaki-clad girls on business bent, or splendid, silver-buttoned policewomen. If he were bound for the country he would find brawny women hauling luggage up his terminus platform; while from the train windows he would presently view women harvesting, fruit-picking, turnip-hoeing, ploughing with great traction motors, cutting trees, milking cows, driving cattle to market, doing in fact the field toil of the season.

"Ye gods," the travelling male may have exclaimed if this was his first view of the new Britain, "the women have eliminated us. We shall soon be as extinct as the dodo."

* * * * *

But jostling the women at the great London stations were thousands of men home on leave, and other thousands going back from leave every day to action. Out of that *volunteer* army of six millions raised in a few months in this extraordinary land of contradiction of ours, eighteen thousand hearty men could sleep in our metropolis every night in the cosy new beds put up by the Y.M.C.A., Church Army, Salvation Army, the Catholics, etc., while hospitals held many thousands more of the sick, to say nothing of further thousands always up and down on leave.

And let it be whispered gently, those thousand well looked after men who crossed the Channel daily and thousands of wounded men were all being ministered to by mere women.

* * * * *

Every woman who went into munitions or brick-making set a man free to be a soldier. So over two million extra fighting soldiers were sent to the front by the willing substitution of women themselves. They offered to work, while some miserable men had to be thrown out of "cushy" jobs by forcible means.

Then, again, women carried on their husbands' businesses, learnt to disjoint meat, and many other jobs. Ladies of means did anything and everything. One found her greengrocer ill and in need of an operation. The husband was serving; the woman could not go to the hospital and leave the shop. The lady customer stepped in, saying :

"I'll come for two or three days to learn your business, and then I'll run the greengrocery for you while you are away."

She did, and in ten weeks had worked the business up above its normal level.

* * * * *

Among women have been some of the greatest organizers on earth; but it has taken a world war to make men realize that simple little fact. Among women have been some of the most far-seeing brains of the country, the most patriotic souls and most enthusiastic workers; but it has taken a Kaiser to teach British men the fact. Among women have been the most unselfish ministering angels of firm-set purpose and high ideals; but it has taken German shells to teach men this fact also.

Women are wonderful. They always have been; but men are just beginning to realize the truth, and to cease to be jealous of their doings, aye, even to go so far as to applaud them. The change of attitude has been as complete as the passing from winter snows to summer suns.

* * * * *

Women have a way of seeing just 365 days ahead of the ordinary man. They jump at conclusions, men say. Well, perhaps they do. They come to the conclusions, anyway, in a rapid stride, while those dear kind men crawl there on two sticks.

One of the cleverest men of the day once said :

"I always ask my wife's advice in a difficulty, pooh-pooh what she says, and while I am doing so I make up my mind to act on her suggestion."

"Do you tell her so?"

"Oh, no—that would spoil her. I just let her find it out."

Oh, ye men, how little you have encouraged or understood your best friend—woman.

* * * * *

Abnormal times develop abnormal minds. Some of the female sex have got unhinged or a little off the balance, but only a small percentage. The others—the great vast “others”, both men and women—have risen above themselves, and it is hard to say whether the men or the women were the finer in the first fifteen hundred days of war.

War is a boiling-pot of horror—a cauldron, under present conditions, of underground, undersea, and upper air devilments—out of which bubbles every conceivable good. Love, kindness, sympathy, daring, pluck, religion, everything in fact, while only a little dirty mud settles at the bottom of the pan.

Great Britain found herself, thanks to William and his Guard.

* * * * *

The following offer was made to Lord Kitchener a few weeks after war began.

The writer would enlist one hundred women, largely from her friends. They could muster at her house in Regent's Park, which should be an office, and where she could act as Hon. Sec. ; and if Lord Kitchener would lend a sergeant two or three times a week for an hour, we would drill under him, and then drill ourselves so as to get fit for *work of any kind*. Start in some sort of plain clothing, and in a month or so each woman should be competent to train another hundred women. That we should then be ready to be drafted anywhere and into anything, such as munitions or factories, on the land, or any place where women could relieve men, and be put into khaki if necessary. As Queen's College, Bedford College, and University College were all near by, one hoped they would co-operate. The women's services would be voluntary, anyway at first, until we saw how the thing worked, and in time the idea might spread all over the country, and we should found a *Women's Army*. One only wishes one had gone on, but it seemed bad taste to do so in face of such high authority.

Such was the gist of the scheme. Two or three letters passed, but by October, 1914, Lord Kitchener had definitely stated : “Women's work will not be wanted.” Our men must fight and our women must knit.

Baulk No. 1. But three years and nine months later a quarter of a million women were required for filling men's jobs in France.

It is almost as bad to be too soon as too late.

* * * * *

So short was the country of munitions and guns in the early war days that our first divisions of the New Army, which went to France in July, 1915, started training without either. And yet the famous 15th Division won glory at Loos.

Then—with the heads of the Y.M.C.A. (Mr. Yapp—now Sir Arthur—Mr. Virgo, Mr. McCann) and a famous engineer, Mr. Fletcher Toomer—we went in a body to the Vickers establishment at Erith, only to be told that there was no use for women in munitions, that they could never be utilized for big lathes and heavy work, though they already did all the light jobs they were capable of and had always done them. But still undaunted, I arranged with the Y.M.C.A. that they should grant me the loan of their lathes in their headquarters in Tottenham Court Road (the men being nearly all away), and also an enormous brewery at Westminster they had just acquired, where we could put up more lathes. Moreover, I saw the head of the Government Machine Department. He promised help, by sending old machines for learning on, while I guaranteed the arranging and training of the first hundred women, who in their turn should go to other centres, especially to the depleted Y.M.C.A.'s (not then put to other uses), and train other beginners. For six weeks I hammered away; then again saw the head of the Machine Department, and got my first enthusiastic pupils.

But no, "Women cannot make munitions and handle large lathes; women will not be wanted," was the incessant reply. It ended in April, 1915, by the scheme being definitely turned down. However, two staunch girl friends stuck at it, and were in the first batch of ten ladies to be trained, months later, at Woolwich to take the place of men as forewomen, and another was among the first at Hayes.

For me, Baulk No. 2, for one did not wish to act against the Ministry of Munitions.

* * * * *

So much for two resolute attempts to induce Authority to recognize the existence of that priceless potential asset to the

State, an army of women workers ready and eager for any employment. Thank Heaven other women, later, went ahead—without waiting for permission—and nobly succeeded.

The country's rulers did somehow at last stumble upon enlightenment, awake to the fact that they *did* want women's help. They must have wanted it rather badly, for on October 16th, 1916, appeared the interesting announcement :

"The Ministry of Munitions is prepared to receive applications from women of all classes wishing to be trained as munition workers at the centres which the Ministry has established by arrangement with educational authorities in various parts of the kingdom."

It was interesting, but a trifling startling, to know that women were now wanted in quantities—a few hundreds had already dribbled in—for it was made fully sixteen months after the writer had, as seen, volunteered to initiate the very same training for women. Strange, indeed, that the authorities, after solemnly reiterating their non possumus to every such modest suggestion, should so many months later be undertaking the job themselves.

Again, in January, 1917 (published December 25th, 1916), the *English Review* printed an article by the still determined writer, called, hesitatingly and for the first time, "The Women's Army", which opened as follows :

"An army of a million is something to be reckoned with in war. It is a fifth of the new volunteer British Army, gathered from all corners of our possessions.

"To-day there is a New Women's Army of a million more souls, all helping to win the War, so that Europe may cease for centuries to be a munition factory or a human butcher's shop."

The Women's Army was partly formed ; and nine months later came the Government call for 10,000 women to form a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. So the W.A.A.C.s, as they were then called, came into being—and the long suggested Women's Army was at last a complete and accomplished fact. All honour to it.

A mighty host that army was, for a Board of Trade return for September, 1917, gave the number of *extra* women workers who had come into industry and commerce, excluding agricultural labourers, domestics, and many other classes, as already a million and a quarter. The largest share of female labour was absorbed by munitions, which department employed at the end of three years a million soldier-women. Municipal

trams also took 10,000, the Admiralty 3,000 (which before the War had employed no women), the Air Board and similar offices 30,000, Agriculture 84,000. The War Office employed thousands in France also, in every kind of capacity—from clerk or driver-mechanic to store-keeper or gardener. As to the Red Cross nurses and V.A.D.s, their inestimable work in thousands upon thousands is already part of history. Women were working, moreover, at stranger, more unconventional jobs. On Tyneside they were to be seen at the fires doing tool fettling, at the power hammer, and other blacksmith's work.

* * * * *

"What your country has done in the War," said an American visitor, near Christmas, 1917, "is the most amazing hustle the world has ever seen. It is stupendous. I've been round the country to pick up ideas, and I'm packed so full with your ideas that I think my head will burst. I only hope we'll get around anywhere near as fast as you have done over this war." And he had come over after thirty-eight months of war on a tour of investigation for America—at a time when, before America had lost a man, there were a quarter of a million British graves on foreign battlefields.

"Your new factories, your hutments, hostels, canteens are a ceaseless wonder, and your millions of men soldiers and women workers are beyond anything conceivable for three years' work. I take off my hat to your nation's talent."

But that talent is absolutely useless without stability of purpose. Muddles, of course, were made. We had never thought about preparing for war before the War, and had little time for thought, with so much action necessary since, to combat the forty years of Prussian preparation. But the United States had nearly three years to watch us and think out what she might do if she had to come in on either side, and yet she repeated most of our muddles along the very same lines.

We made fearful mistakes. America criticized us severely; but we righted ourselves and we made good.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter a booklet which the Y.M.C.A. published and in which they recognized very handsomely what I did and tried to do for them. In this booklet they reproduced a few letters which I feel should have their place also in the present chapter. They call for no comment from me:

THE RIGHT HON. LORD KINNAIRD

(President, National Council of Y.M.C.A.s).

DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

Many thanks for your letter with the very interesting enclosures.

I congratulate you most heartily on the wonderful list of your friends whom you have introduced to help your Y.M.C.A. Hut Scheme.

I congratulate you most heartily upon the wonderful work which you have done and the great success of your efforts to help the soldiers and sailors. The Y.M.C.A. is under a deep debt of obligation to you, and if the weather throughout the country is anything like we have had here for past two weeks, many hearts will be opened and hands ready to sign cheques to help.

With renewed thanks to you for all you have done and are doing; the thanks of all soldiers and officers are showered on your head.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed), KINNAIRD (the late).

The late Lord Kinnaird who practically made the Y.M.C.A.

ADMIRAL SIR PERCY SCOTT, BART., K.C.B., K.C.V.O.,
LL.D.

DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

52, South Audley Street, W.

It is impossible to overrate the good that the Y.M.C.A. is doing during this war, and I sincerely hope that you will be able to get more huts.

In almost every district now we have crowds of young men, and their only recreation-room is the public-house.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) PERCY SCOTT.

A general introduction to take abroad sent me by Sir Arthur Yapp, Head of the Y.M.C.A.

National Council of Young Men's Christian Association.

Tottenham Court Road,

February 26th, 1919.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

I have the greatest possible pleasure in introducing Mrs. Alec-Tweedie who has rendered such yeoman service to the Y.M.C.A. through the War.

She has been responsible for raising money for nearly forty huts in France, and in addition to this Mrs. Alec-Tweedie collected a large number of pianos, musical instruments, and books in the early days of the War.

I now hear she has collected 250 footballs for the Army of Occupation in Germany.

I shall be glad if you will extend her every possible facility in her journey to her son's grave at Vermelle.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. YAPP,

National Secretary.

ADMIRAL LORD CHARLES BERESFORD

1 Great Cumberland Place,

London, W.

DEAR MRS. TWEEDIE,

No work has been more appreciated than that of the Y.M.C.A. for the comfort, convenience, and care of the men of the Services during this war. The energy of the Y.M.C.A. is only equalled by its patriotism.

I am so glad to hear that you are going to try and double the number of huts, for which the men of the Services will be eternally grateful.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) CHARLES BERESFORD.

GENERAL SIR CHARLES C. MONRO, K.C.B.

DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

Your Y.M.C.A. installations have proved a very great boon to the troops in the Mediterranean. They supply a need of infinite value. I hope therefore you may be able to expand to an abundant degree the admirable work which the Y.M.C.A. has done both in France and elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

C. C. MONRO,

General, Commander M.E.F.

GENERAL BINDON BLOOD, G.C.B.

DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

You ask me about the Y.M.C.A. huts. There can be no possible doubt about the good that has resulted from them, and about the soldiers' appreciation of them. The whole arrangement is excellent, and most creditable to its organizers and managers.

MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE'S HUT SCHEME

WITHIN two months of the commencement of the War Mrs. Alec-Tweedie collected—

125,000 BOOKS
130 PIANOS
100 BILLIARD TABLES
ENDLESS NUMBER OF
GRAMOPHONES
BAGATELLES
TABLES
CHAIRS
etc.

THIS scheme of Bazaars, Rummage Sales, and Private Entertainments is to increase the already existing number of Y.M.C.A. Centres (over 1,100) and to help pay for their upkeep. A million new men have just joined the forces.

DURING the first three months about £11,000 was collected and a large number of Huts were provided as the result of Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's Scheme, including:—

	Placed at
The Navy Hut	Harwich Extension
"T. R. Marshall" Hut	Waterloo Station
Torquay and District Hut	Salisbury Plain
South Devon Hut	
Southwark (2)	France and Egypt
Uiverston and District Hut	France
Kensington Hut	London
Graham Hut	France
Chester and District Hut	Egypt
Romford and District Hut	France
Woking and District Hut	
Lynn and District Hut	
St Marylebone Hut	P.D.
Penrhynendreath Hut	France
Sjlsden and District Hut	Boldre
East Boldre Hut	near Dover
Langdon Point Hut	
Broughton Vale and District Hut	Chapel St. Leonards
Exmouth and Helston District Hut	Mullion
Westminster Hut	
Accrington Hut	France
Guiseley Hut	France
Middlewich Hut	
Wareham Hut	
Leslie Tweedie Memorial Lounge	near British Museum

It is an excellent idea to ask the men to contribute towards the support of the huts by means of collecting boxes on the counters, and I feel sure they will respond well to the invitation to do so. The huts have supplied a real want.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) B. BLOOD.

CAPTAIN A. C. CANDY, R.N.

H.M.S. "DOLPHIN".

DEAR MADAM,

In response to your eloquent appeal for funds for building Huts for the troops, under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A., I have much pleasure in sending you £20, voted by the Canteen Committee of the above Naval Establishment under my command.

In your beautifully worded appeal, which none but the most callous could possibly neglect, you speak of those who are defending the Empire at sea and on land in terms of admiration for their services to the Motherland.

May I, in return, point out that the men are deeply grateful and devoutly thankful for the whole-hearted, vigorous and untiring efforts on their behalf made by the women of the Empire, without whose honorary and loving help they would be unable to obtain a tenth part of the comforts for body and mind they now receive.

Though not given to expressing their thoughts in the accepted manner, not having the opportunity for one thing and, having the opportunity, not possessing the necessary degree of eloquence, I am certain the men of both Services continuously call down blessings on the heads of their many benefactors.

You, Mrs. Tweedie, hold high place in their hearts, and I heartily congratulate you on the well-merited distinction conferred upon you by the Government, which I consider equivalent to being awarded a decoration for your patriotic service.*

In conclusion, may I express a hope—shared with me by many brother officers and, I am certain, by the men—that those women who have worked so nobly, so unselfishly, for the benefit of all concerned in this great struggle for right, as against might, will be decorated with the usual marks of distinction for War Service, and wear on their breasts the coveted ribbons in the same manner as those who have faced the enemy at sea and on land.

*A mistake on his part.

THIS GOLLYWOG IS MADE OUT OF AN OLD STOCKING

The GOLLYWOG FUND is for the orphans of the men of the Royal Navy and Naval Auxiliary Services who have lost their lives in action during the war.

The money will be administered by the Navy League Overseas Relief Committee.

GOLLYWOGS amuse the children (and the grown-ups?). They employ boys and girls and wounded soldiers.

They utilize useless wornout stockings. Besides which they cost practically nothing.

Paper patterns with all particulars for making sent on receipt of an addressed envelope and 6 penny stamps. Three patterns 1/-. When you have made your Gollywog won't you sell it to a friend and send the money to the fatherless children of our seamen as above?

Please do not lend your pattern without handing the sixpence to the Fund.

Each hundred pounds will keep and educate a child.

DIRECTIONS.

Lay the stocking out flat. Cut out this Gollywog and pin him on the stocking. His head will come about the calf. His feet come at the opening of the leg, and the rest of the stocking helps to stuff him up. Buttonhole round the Gollywog or sew him securely round and turn him inside out. Put 2 buttons for his eyes, 4 for his coat, tufts of red wool or fur for his hair. Outline his nose, eyebrows, fangs, and boots before you begin to stuff him. You can dress him up if you like

ALL COMMUNICATIONS by LETTER ONLY to Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, 32, Whitehall-Court, London, S.W. 1.

A gollywog made from an old stocking. For the Navy League Overseas Relief Fund he earned about £400. The author received the Navy League "Special Service" medal for her war work for the Navy.

Please accept my best wishes for all success in the coming year, and may the result be commensurate with your devoted efforts.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,

(Signed) A. C. CANDY
Captain, R.N.

Mrs. Alec-Tweedie.

* * * * *

No one, no family, and no individual worked harder in these war years than our Royal Family. Among them, Prince Arthur of Connaught. He is an excellent linguist. He speaks many languages well. During the War he entered Germany as a junior officer with the British Army. One night at the opera the German band struck up "Die wacht am Rhein". "Our soldiers drew up at attention. Every man's arms to his sides as if for the King. When it was over, the German officer said to our Colonel: 'Your men don't seem to know that is a German tune.' 'Oh, yes, they do. They are standing at attention because they think it is specially for them, for they know they have come here to watch the Rhine.'"

His Royal Highness continued: "Our soldiers are our best ambassadors the world over. They are fine chaps and an honour to the land."

* * * * *

Prince Arthur of Connaught is a remarkably tall, handsome man, prematurely bald like all the Royal family. He is far taller than his ever-popular father, the Duke of Connaught, and just as much of a disciplinarian.

He likes a good story and tells a story well, and is so chatty that he is a delightful dinner companion.

One day he was rather amusing on the subject of Eton. "Oh, what a time I had. I was fag to a difficult young gentleman, and well I remember burning his omelette and getting eight stripes for my sins."

"Can you make an omelette now, Sir?"

"Rather. I made a jolly good one last week. Of course, as a fag I learnt to cook eggs in every way, and bacon and sausages, and clean boots. Oh, I know all about it, and can clean a pair of boots with anyone. Public schools were rough in my days in 1883, and, added to that, everyone made it harder for me because I was 'Royalty'. I can assure you there was no royalty left in

me after a few weeks. But it did me a lot of good, and I still cherish the memory of the old top hat. Talking of Royalty," he continued, "I do wish the Press wouldn't invent so many stories and rumours. They are always sending me up and down to Scotland. Only the other day they announced I had gone up north. A desperate telegram was dispatched to Mar Lodge to remind me I had promised to open a hospital ward that day at three o'clock.

"I knew perfectly well I had agreed to open that ward at three o'clock, and had left my shooting and travelled down all night to keep my promise. But you see the Press had sent me *up* to the north instead of *down* to the South."

"The penalty of Royalty, Sir."

"It is a penalty in many ways," he sighed, "but one tries to do one's best."

Our Royalties are very wonderful. They can never call their time their own, it is always at the disposal of the nation.

"I know that picture of you," said his Royal Highness one day, "I know it well" (indicating a portrait by Herbert Schmalz upon my wall). "An engraving of it is in the billiard-room at Mar Lodge."*

Now Mar Lodge belonged to his mother-in-law, the Princess Royal, widow of the Duke of Fife.

"Does it?" I exclaimed, surprised.

"Yes, I know it well. The Duke had it," and turning to Princess Arthur, he said: "You know it too."

"Of course," she replied.

The Princess Arthur of Connaught is very pretty but very quiet, with a great resemblance to King George in appearance. She has three hobbies—big game hunting (and she is a frail-looking little person, but an excellent shot), hospital work, and children's welfare. She dons cap and apron and works enthusiastically in the wards and did so all through those awful war years. She still drives herself two mornings a week alone in her own little car to work in the babies' wards. She never shirks, and whatever job turns up she takes her share of the work as a hospital nurse.

Her Royal Highness's fourth pleasure is dancing, and as a postscript one might add, singing.

* * * * *

* See Chapter VIII (facing page 123).

Prince Arthur's remark about the British Tommy being Great Britain's finest ambassador fits in with Major-General Sir William Thwaites's summing up about the Rhine when I was there in November, 1929, and we were busily evacuating our task.

How prophetic "Die Wacht am Rhein" at Cologne, when Tommy thought he was being invited to guard the Rhine, and how magnificently he did it—without fuss or stir—and just as their Commander said: "Two years after the British Army leaves our influence will cease to be felt, and Germany's new troubles will begin."

They did.

CHAPTER XII

HARLEY AND HIS GREAT FLIGHT

A skilful pilot—A flight of world repute—Described by Miss Nellie Anderson and Mrs. D. M. Bright—The hero's own description—Which would win, the storm or the aeroplane?—Staff College, Quetta—Back to London—Staff Work—The first English Airman of Geneva—Lord Allenby—Rudyard Kipling—Ambition for one's children—War graves of beauty.

I WAS in Paris in May, 1919, on my way back from visiting some of my Y.M.C.A. huts when General Dickie of the Royal Engineers, who had been employed on the Land Defences of London, and with the Independent Air Force in France, walked in.

"I congratulate you," he said, "on your son's magnificent flight."

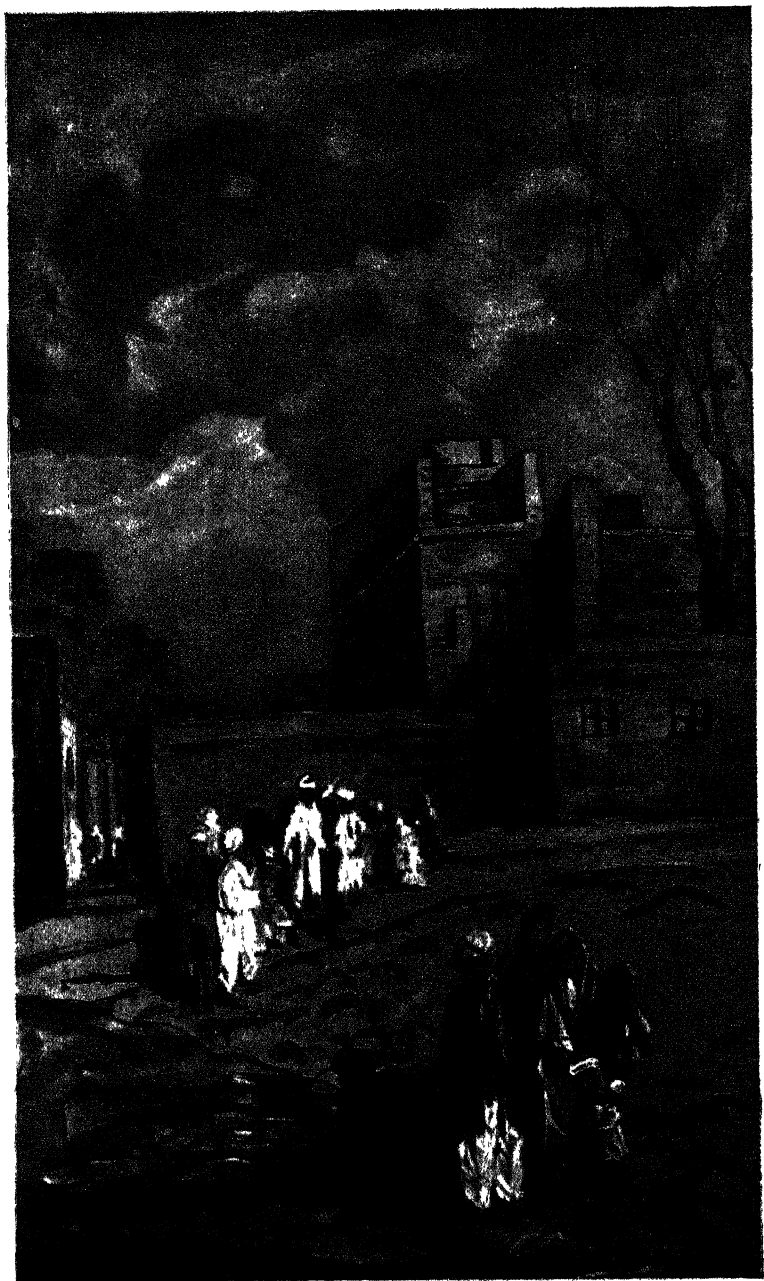
"What flight?" I asked.

"Why, it is in all the French papers everywhere to-night that he has flown across the Himalayas."

I was struck dumb. I had not the slightest idea he intended to try anything of the kind, and it was certainly the first news that I had received that he had accomplished it. Reuters had thought it such an important event for India that they had cabled it all over the world, and it appeared translated in many foreign newspapers. In India it naturally was the subject of conversation for many a day. That was the beginning of flying, remember, in India, and it was a pioneer effort and a real event. Months later I was in India myself and everyone I met asked me if I was any relative of Major Tweedie who flew, etc.

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From a bed of sickness that courageous sufferer, Miss Nellie Anderson, writes me as follows. She was long with the Chelmsfords in India. She is the sister of two distinguished officers, Lieut.-General Sir Hastings Anderson who died in 1931 and Admiral Sir Murray Anderson :



Amritsar, Punjab, where 370 rebels were shot after warning
against riotous meetings, 1919.

"You must be very interested in the Viceroy's flights in India (1932)—what a contrast to 1919 when your son startled us all by his sudden descent on Simla in his aeroplane. You can imagine what a 'thrill' it was as an item, in an ordinary Saturday afternoon Gymkhana at Annandale, and what an achievement to soar over the Himalayas and descend like a huge bird, in the centre of that far-famed Club ground, the centre of sport and romance for so many generations in Simla.

"I wonder what Lord William Beresford, founder of that pleasure ground, would have said to that up-to-date stunt.

"To understand the full wonder of the achievement it is necessary to realize that Annandale is a small flat, grass-covered plateau, to reach which one has to ride, or be pulled in a rickshaw, by rocky winding roads or paths, mostly through beautiful pine woods, down from the surrounding heights and suddenly at the bottom one reaches this flat space. Club House and seats for spectators are on the side of one hill, at the foot of a polo Pavilion, bordering on the Polo ground, encircled by a miniature race-course.

"That Saturday afternoon in 1919 we were all languidly watching with tepid interest the usual events of an Indian Gymkhana, when everyone knows both performers and ponies by sight and name. Unhappy owners forced to lend their precious ponies to enterprising young ladies were trying probably to trim hats in a given time, while wondering sadly as to the probable sore backs of the next day. Suddenly a droning sound, then slowly amidst the misty blue distance of the lofty mountain peaks an aeroplane was seen approaching—like a huge vulture descending on its prey. How could it, and how would it, land in that small space—open only at one end? For Annandale is almost horse-shoe like in shape, and only at the narrow end of the 'shoe' is it open and unprotected by the surrounding mountains, but the Pilot hit off the opening, as if familiar with it, and while we held our breath, he made a safe and sure landing, just on the only spot where it was possible to do so.

"We gasped, then gave a sigh of relief.

"Providence was watching over the intrepid pioneer for no sooner had he landed, with a revolver as his only luggage, than a sudden terrific storm descended on us, such a storm as can only come amidst those mountain tops. Rain, thunder, wind, and as far as I recollect, the shed on the far side of the ground, where

the aeroplane was finally placed, was blown away. It was a dangerous game. And caused no little excitement and commotion.

"Englishmen do not vaunt their prowess or waste words in admiration of their fellows, but though things in the aerial world have advanced rapidly since those days, nothing can obliterate the recollection of that first flight, or deduct from the tribute of admiration we all offer still to the calm courage of that brave aviator, who was then on General McEwan's Staff.

"(*Signed*) E. ANDERSON."

I had often wondered what happened to the aeroplane. Mrs. Bright, wife of General Bright of Mesopotamia fame and who herself acted as Staff Officer No. 3 in Simla to the Air Force, writes me :

"20. I. 32.

"DEAR MRS. TWEEDIE,

"I received your letter this morning and shall be only too pleased to give you further details of Harley's exploit.

"At the time he undertook the flight there was considerable unrest in Northern India, and there is no doubt that the effect on the native population was important, as it showed them aircraft could be used over Simla, a fact which they had not appreciated at that time. Harley left Amballa in the early afternoon and the trip took about three-quarters of an hour. He was faced from the outset with bad flying conditions as he ran into a thick duststorm almost immediately, and as he was approaching Simla a very bad thunderstorm. The landing on the polo ground was a very tricky performance as Annandale lies in a cup of steep hills thickly forested and only approachable by a narrow nullah on the north-west. The ground at this end is fenced by a wall, and to get the lift to clear this gave very little space for landing. This he timed to a nicety and made a perfect landing. As the machine came to a standstill a heavy hailstorm broke over Simla, the stones were so big that they perforated the wings necessitating many repairs and taking down a bit of the wall, before the machine was flown back some days later. This was undertaken by Colonel F. F. Minchin who was then commanding R.A.F. on the North-West Frontier, and a brilliant pilot, who subsequently lost his life attempting to fly the Atlantic. The machine used was a Camel, of which type there were only two in India at the time. It was with great regret I heard of Harley's death as I had a very high opinion

of his brains and we used to thrash out daily together in the offices schemes for the organization of the R.A.F. in India.

"Believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"(Signed), D. M. BRIGHT."

And what of the young man himself who dared and won. His letter to me dated the 9th May, 1919 (four days after the flight), from the Royal Air Force Headquarters of India, said :

"DEAREST MOTHER,

"We are at war again in Afghanistan and we have had so much work these last few days that I am afraid I have missed the mail.

"Well, I have done it, as you will see by the enclosed, and people have been good enough to make quite a fuss about it. In fact, I am rather angry about it, as I don't believe in R.A.F. work appearing in the papers, especially with names.

"I had a very hard day on my birthday but ended up with a cheery dinner, at which the General and a few friends were present. . . .

"This war may fizzle out, but personally I don't think it will. It may on the Frontier, but I feel sure it won't *internally*."

* * * * *

He was right, and when he returned to India after the Great War he was very perturbed at the want of a strong hand.

The following extracts come from the official report which is more technical :

"The flight was an attempt to fly from Amballa to Simla and land on the Annandale Race-course, the only bit of flat ground at Simla.

"In case of engine failure there were only two courses open, one to pancake on the top of a tree, the other to pancake on to some road.

"A Camel machine was sent from Lahore ; but owing to a forced landing it only reached Amballa at 9.45 a.m. when it was already hot, so Tweedie, who had not been in a Camel for over a year, had no time to try it before his flight arranged for that afternoon.

* * * * *

"A wire said the weather was fine at Simla but hazy ; but

there were signs of another duststorm. Tweedie was timed to arrive at Simla at 4 o'clock.

"It took twenty minutes to start the engine.

"He left the ground at 3.35. Rising 6,000 feet near Kalka he could see nothing. It was like a London fog. Leaving Kalka at 7,000 a distance still of twenty-nine flying miles from Simla and sixty by road, at 8,000 feet the London fog appeared creeping up behind and owing to clouds the mountains were not visible.

"The engine spluttered. Only moisture trouble.

"At 9,000 feet the storm was getting nearer and nearer and he was not sure whether he or the storm would reach Simla first.

"Passed over Simla at 10,000 feet, dropped down the other side. For this it was necessary to come down into a cup of the hills to land at Annandale, lying about two or three thousand feet below Simla itself. The moment he throttled down the machine became almost unmanageable owing to bumps, due no doubt to the thunderstorm at that moment overhead.

"Annandale is three hundred by four hundred feet and the ground can only be approached from one end. He was lucky enough to approach correctly, jump over the wall between the trees and land. Time, forty minutes in the air. Storm broke immediately. Hailstones the size of pigeons' eggs.

* * * * *

"It had been a toss up which would win, the plane or the hailstorm. The hailstones drove through the wings as if they had been made of paper. If this had occurred while the plane was still in flight, it must almost inevitably have resulted in the plane being wrecked. The soldiers waiting with tarpaulins to cover the old Camel had not time to get the cover on before large holes were pierced in the wings by the hailstones."

This flight, from all I have heard, was of great value to our Government in India, as it dramatically demonstrated the possibilities of aircraft, properly handled. It was a great event and had its use in a critical situation in India.

A Gymkhana was the moment chosen by the Officer in Command because this "stunt", for such it was, was to show India that the little white man in the little white-winged machine was master of the air.

It did the trick. News flies like magic in India. No one

knows how. The natives can seldom read so everything has to be conveyed by word of mouth. But the story grew between Simla and Afghanistan where shortly terror was felt in anticipation of thousands of white men with white wings descending upon recalcitrant tribes.

* * * * *

Soon after this Harley was sent to the Staff College at Quetta where he and Flight-Lieutenant Horsley were the first British Airmen to pass the Staff College. This gives the much valued honour of P.S.C. after the recipient's name ; but such was the feeling between the Army and the Air Force they were not allowed the honour of using those three coveted letters, P.S.C. Later he was appointed the first representative of the Royal Air Force at Geneva, and worked hard at the League of Nations in this capacity as a member of the Sub-Commission (Naval, Military and Air) of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference for nearly four years. He was intensely interested in the work. It was strenuous work, and anxious work in those initial days.

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Then it came that he was appointed to the Temporary Command of Transjordan and wrote enthusiastically of his new job saying "they are all such awfully good chaps here." One morning in April, 1926, he went up in a D.H.9 Aeroplane along with Flight-Lieutenant S. H. Wallage, a fine pilot and a charming young man attached to Headquarters, Royal Air Force, Transjordan.

A few minutes after the flight commenced the machine suddenly entered into a spin and crashed. Both officers were killed instantly. "Cause of accident unknown."

The only crumb of comfort for me was that my boy passed like his brother into the Great Beyond, as through an open door, without suffering and for his Country.

* * * * *

From Flight-Lieutenant Thornton, R.A.F., a total stranger to me, I received the following kindly account of the accident :

"I was in touch with Squadron-Leader Tweedie more than the others by reason of our duties and I have lost not only a very fine Commanding Officer, but a firm friend. As you know,

it is the Commanding Officer who sets the tenor of a station, both in work and at play, and Squadron-Leader Tweedie did the right thing instinctively and this, in spite of the fact that he came to us from Staff life, and the adjustment is by no means easy.

"For me, as his Adjutant, he was most easy and charming to work with. We were hard at work at the time of the accident searching for the lost Spaniards,* and before breakfast that Saturday, he decided to do a little dual flying with Wallage as he was most anxious to get on full flying duty again.

"Just before getting into the machine, he asked me to warn him by smoke-bomb if any news came through about the Spaniards, and after seeing his machine take off, I went to the wireless cabin where I found an important message waiting. Running back to the aerodrome, I called for the smoke-bomb, and was told the machine had come down off the aerodrome. Hurrying away to the machine in the fire tender, I felt sure it was just an ordinary forced landing ; but on my arrival I saw it was as bad as it could have been.

"The doctor was already there and his first words to me were : 'Death instantaneous in both cases,' and that is the only word of comfort I have for you in this bad business.

"I called in the Victoria, which is a large-engined troop-carrying 'plane and which was helping in the search for the lost Spanish fliers, and I arranged for the bodies to be flown over in it to Palestine that afternoon. At four o'clock the coffins, covered by the Royal Air Force ensign, were carried by the first tender slowly past the Squadron, a full parade, and placed in the Victoria which was standing with engines running.

"On the aerodrome, to pay their last respects, were His Highness the Emir Abdulla, Colonel Cox, the C.B.R., Peake Pasha, the Chief Minister, all the British and many native officers of the local forces.

"And so Squadron-Leader Harley Alec Tweedie left his last Command."

Flight-Lieutenant H. T. Wigglesworth wrote me : "The Squadron-Leader had only been with us for barely seven weeks, but during that time we had got very fond of him and all were happy in serving under him."

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* This refers to Captain Estenez and his mechanic who came down in the desert a hundred miles from Harley's Station, while en route from Madrid to Manila.

I cannot refrain from adding a few extracts from some of the nine hundred odd letters of condolence received from his friends, and my friends, and kind sympathizers in the public. My grief was deep, but these kind friends, among whom he had lived and worked, combined to do their best to assuage it.

Field-Marshal Lord Plumer, who was then High Commissioner in Palestine, telegraphed his sincere condolences, and the Air Minister, Sir Samuel Hoare, said: "The Royal Air Force can ill afford to lose the services of such officers as your son."

General McEwan, under whom Harley served in India, before going to the Staff College, wrote: "The tragic news of Harley's death came to us this morning. I have known him so well since 1918, when I particularly asked that he should be in India with me. His loyalty and friendship to me were always so splendid and especially when things were difficult. His Himalaya flight at a very critical time in the history of India was really great."

Major-General Sir Sefton Brancker, Head of Civil Aviation, in sending his sympathy, added: "It is cruel luck on you and on the R.A.F. who will feel the loss of so efficient and promising an officer." (Sir Sefton Brancker was killed later in that terrible accident to R.101.)

There were many letters from his brother officers telling of the joy they had had in his friendship and of their admiration for the way he had lived and carried out his work amongst them. Then I received from the League of Nations a copy of the Minutes of the first session held after Harley's death, in which tributes were paid to his memory. Letters came from all the nations and all the Services with whom he had worked at Geneva for four years.

General de Marinio (Italy), an Acting President of the Permanent Advisory Commission of the League, said, he felt he should not miss the opportunity to express on behalf of his colleagues to their comrades of the British Delegation, their deep and heartfelt sympathy on the occasion of the fatal accident to which Squadron-Leader Tweedie had lately fallen a victim. All those who had the honour of knowing him as a colleague would combine in paying a warm tribute to his memory.

Delegates from other nations also spoke and were thanked by Squadron-Leader Don (Great Britain), who promised to convey the sentiments which had been expressed to the late Squadron-Leader's mother.

This tribute was duly sent to me. I have a copy of the letter in which I made my acknowledgments, and in it I took the opportunity of adding what I feel is in every mother's heart as to the encouragement of all steps which can be taken to deal with international enmity by arbitration and discussion rather than by the sword. This is what I said :

"GENTLEMEN,

"May I express to you my most profound thanks for your sympathetic words at the Session of the League of Nations on the tragic death of my last son—your colleague.

"At the same time, may I assure you of his oft-repeated appreciation of the kindness he always received at Geneva during his four years work there. He felt he had many good friends among you, and always spoke warmly of their personal kindness.

"Your words have touched me deeply. If you have lost a colleague I have lost my last son, for the other has lain in France since 1916.

"Gentlemen, for the sake of us Mothers—and I am only one of a million British mothers who lost their sons in war—use all the powers you possess to stop the repetition of such horrors as 1914-18 followed by this disastrous aftermath.

"In true appreciation.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Yours faithfully,

"E. ALEC-TWEEDIE."

The funeral, with full honours, was held at Ramleh Cemetery on April 18th, 1926, every section of the community being represented. The High Commissioner, Lord Plumer, motored all the way from Jerusalem to attend. The coffins had been brought from Amman (Transjordan) the previous evening by aeroplane and were taken to the cemetery in the funeral procession on Sunday morning by armoured cars. It was a beautiful morning and there were many lovely flowers.

Thus passed my elder son. If a mother *has* to part with her son, what more could she wish than Harley left to me—a proud memory.

I don't mean for one moment his passing was more terrible than dear cheery happy old Leslie's—but Leslie's was in war days. Death was calling our best on every side ; one would not acknowledge the terror of a mother with two sons at Loos in

September, 1915 (one of the most awful moments of all the War), but we had to be brave and work on. But somehow ten years had made a difference. Death was not imminent and everywhere. The young seemed safe. Life seemed safe.

This was a bolt from the blue.

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How inappropriate it seems that those wonderful airmen whose work has been in the skies, should be laid to rest in the cold earth. Would it not be suitable that these valiant crusaders of the air should have their ashes scattered to the winds of Heaven? Cremation has everything to recommend it. Earth burial has nothing. Why not institute sky burial for Airmen? This would mean cremation first, which is hygienic and inexpensive and is only an ancient custom revived on modern lines.

After cremation the pure white ash, weighing very little, could be taken up in the air by a Pilot, and as the service is read below that pure ash could be scattered above the clouds and borne away on the winds of the world.

A poetic idea anyway, and surely a proper ending to a heroic life, but this rite should be reserved for Pilots and Observers only for they are the real airmen and have risked their lives in the clouds ever in a spirit of adventurous endeavour, even in Peace time. Could we not institute this as an honour, a real honour, to these young men of the mists and zephyrs?

Sailors who have died on land often ask to be buried at sea. Soldiers are buried near the battlefield on which they fell. What finer funeral rite for an airman than to be buried in the air—the element to which he gave his life and in which he lost it.

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Then one day four years later (1930) at Sir John and Lady Bland Sutton's house (the old Tweedie home as told elsewhere), a voice called me. I turned round, it was Rudyard Kipling with his shaggy black eyebrows and friendly mien.

"I was going to write to you," he said. "I've been visiting the war graves in Palestine and made a particular point of looking up your son's grave at Ramleh. I wanted to tell you it is in excellent order—as, in fact, they all are—and I read with great interest the inscription carved on the stone."

"How very kind of you," I stuttered.

"Not at all, not at all," said the kind little man. "I was

only too glad to look it up and am only too glad to tell you all is well."

Wasn't it wonderful of him.

I knew Rudyard Kipling had lost his only son, so I asked General Dunsterville, the famous "Stalky" of his school-days, how it happened.

"Yes, he had an only son. John got a commission in the Irish Guards and was killed almost at once on the French Front."

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It takes a big man sometimes to do a little thing. The nobodies do nothing for anybody—that is why they remain nobodies. The Bodies who do things for one become Somebodies.

When Lord Allenby was off to Palestine in the Spring of 1928, to open the War Cemeteries, I told him I had not been able to hear any details of my son's grave at Ramleh.

"I am not going there," he said. "But I am going to Gaza, nearby. Just send me the details and if I have time in the three days in Palestine, I will see what can be done."

A few weeks later, he walked in unannounced one morning, having arrived back the day before, exclaiming: "I have brought you some photographs."

"Did you go to Ramleh?" I asked.

"No. But I sent someone and there are the photographs."

Allenby, like Kipling, lost his only child in the War; and Allenby is one of the most human people I have ever met in spite of his bluff exterior and deep voice which made him known during the War as "the bull".

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How little one realizes one's intense ambition for ones' children till they are gone. It takes two parents to do justice to a child, two points of view, and is doubly difficult when there is only one. Then one feels the planning and arranging and thinking out and dreaming for their futures has been a life work. And when they are gone one great big blank lies ahead. Ambition is dead. There is nothing to plan for, no one to encourage and inspire, no one left to live for. Greater people than I would have ridden supreme in a flash. I took months and months to pull myself together. It seemed well-nigh impossible to carry on. As we grow older we go through the bitterness of disillusionment.

What a terrible number of only sons were killed during the War, and what a toll of heirs to titles.

And as a postscript to this chapter, may I add that the British War Graves are wonderful. They are full of flowers and beautifully kept. I have seen them in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Russia, Salonica, Turkey, Egypt, Sudan and India, and they have always been a surprise and a joy.

CHAPTER XIII

PAINTING THE WORLD

Pandora's Paint-box—My mother's advice—Painting in Spain—A premonition of bad news—The fateful telegram—My mother dead—An enthralling discovery—Marshal Foch opens my Paris Exhibition—The Galeries Georges Petit filled—"How much for the Press?"—Nothing doing—Paris Press Notices—Trials of Publicity agents—Return with 400 sketches—Memories with the brush—Crisis in France—Loneliness—What of the future?—Relics of the Paris Show—Painting in a cabin and in a car—The beauty of Egypt—Collectors and my pictures—Tributes from all sides—Lord Conway and M. H. Spielmann—*The Times* report of 1921 Exhibition—The Second Exhibition—A visit from the Queen—Signing 400 pictures—Painting in China—A deaf elephant—And what of books?

PANDORA was not the only woman whose feminine curiosity could not resist opening the lid of her box, and she was not the only one who found that all else had flown from it but Hope. The hope I had of being able to depict in shape and colour things as I saw them was a dream which had come true. Certainly it had been hard work, but so also it had been joyful, with a twinge of regret perhaps for the years that had slipped by without my box being opened.

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And now we must turn back the clock. When the Great War ended I couldn't sit still with folded hands, could I? That to a woman of action would have driven me mad. One cannot fight sorrow with folded hands. Like others, I didn't know how terribly I had felt the strain of two sons at the front in those awful years—of Zeppelins overhead, or my own war-work—until the strain ended. Then I knew that I should either sit down and play bridge and knit, grow old and stupid doing nothing, or I must give myself a mental, moral and physical shake and start a new life.

Where to go and what to do was the question. Being blessed with a wonderful and adorable mother, she stepped in and solved the problem, if I may be forgiven for repeating a story told elsewhere.

"My dear," she said solemnly, when I was wondering what to do, "if you don't do *something* you will crack. Go away to Spain. That country has not been troubled by war. You are quite alone. (My son Harley had just been sent to a Staff job in India.) Go. You painted very nicely when you were a little girl. Go and paint."

"Paint. Why, mother, I haven't painted since I *was* a little girl, and I never even learned to paint then."

"Never mind, my dear, go and try."

Still I hesitated. Several times she returned to the charge. I felt a brute but firmly refused. The idea seemed ridiculous.

"Well," she persisted, "as you are so reluctant to go away or do anything at all, why not, just to please me, spend a sovereign on some paints. If you fail, you will have lost exactly twenty shillings; if you succeed, you may live to bless your old mother. Go away and try."

Still I hesitated. I was too jaded to move. But she persisted.

A wonderful wife, a perfect mother, a house-proud woman, and withal, her greatest charm was her unfailing sympathy. Anyone can find fault, it is the easiest way of showing, or attempting to show, one's superiority. Sympathy more often helps one to achieve success. She lived for others; the main-spring of many lives, and she retained her interest in everyone and everything. She was the mainstay of her husband's home, she was the incentive from which her children worked.

And so through the insistence of a dear wise old mother I started for Spain, intending the holiday to last a couple of months. San Sebastian was a former haunt of hers and mine, and we had old friends there, so I attacked paper, paint and brushes and muddled and got disheartened and muddled again and got more disheartened, but still went on.

She had asked me to. She was waiting for the result.

About a fortnight went by. I had worked very hard and at the same time enjoyed the extraordinary spectacle of shops and restaurants full of food and butter and cheese and tomatoes and bananas and even cakes, all of which luxuries were almost unknown in London during the last two years of the War.

One particular Sunday in March, 1919, in a Spanish fishing village, I was unutterably miserable, and woke up in a cold perspiration, feeling that something was very wrong. All the morning I struggled with the depression, so that a little friend

who was with me might not guess how utterly overpowered I was by a strange feeling of fear.

I tried to paint ; but I could not paint. I tried to write, but I could not write. A curious premonition of something horrible was upon me.

Always being extremely psychic and never wishing to give way to that dangerous influence, I struggled to put it behind me ; but it was no good. I could do nothing. My brain was on fire, but I felt numb.

At last the brilliant idea seized me that I would bestir myself and get busy, that I would collect the few little sketches I had made at San Sebastian since leaving London a fortnight before, and put them neatly into a parcel and post them off to my old mother, who had inspired the attempt and was waiting—waiting to see its development.

As it was Sunday I could not register the wretched parcel though somehow I felt the importance of getting it off at once ; so I wrote the name on the back of each sketch, tied them respectfully up in brown paper, sealed them with care, addressed them and laid them upon the table. They were ready to send home for the old lady to see, that she might enjoy the pleasure of looking at the places we had visited together some fifteen years before ; the recollection would please her, whether the sketches were good, bad or indifferent. They were done for her and I felt better.

The irritation that day of not being able to get them off to her by television was horrible, but I felt better.

Later my friend and I had our *déjeuner* together. I was a miserable companion, although she was kind enough not to say so. We collected our traps and by twelve o'clock marched up the hill to paint.

When we were half-way up that Pyrenean side I made the excuse that I wanted to paint and at that spot. I really wanted to be alone. She trudged up the hill to get a better view and left me. There I sat (I can see the place now) on a rocky boulder overlooking the broad Atlantic, peering across its blue waters to the West, when that horrible feeling with which I had awakened in the morning came upon me again.

A couple of hours later my companion returned and was somewhat amazed and amused to find I had done nothing, but was still sitting with my paper idly before me, still gazing out to sea. . . .

A wire was put into my hand in that fishing village of Mont-rico, in Northern Spain, to tell me that my dear old mother had passed away at one o'clock that March Sunday.

She never saw the pictures which she had inspired.

I had left her well, less than three weeks before, but the War and 'flu had played their part. A merciful release after years of suffering from rheumatism and arthritis. Although it was an irreparable loss to me, I have never wished her back ; she had suffered too much. But oh, the void her passing left.

Another great grief in my life.

I had written to her almost every day for fifteen years, or sent her some letters or cuttings or papers. It really seemed as if the last links with England and home had been snapped. Why return ?

In three years I had been deprived of a son and a mother, two people whom I dearly loved, and only those in like positions can realize what that means.

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The following is a friend's (Miss Mildred Orwin's) note of that mother in her old age.

"I have always been attracted by attractive old age, but as a rule one is not allowed the privilege of getting very near to the mind of old age ; for, in most cases, the relations of the old lady or gentleman in question are so keen on sparing them any fatigue or initiative, that they translate their actions and words for them (often quite wrongly) and being old they sink back and feel, 'What does it matter what I think ?' But it does matter ; they may be slow in their utterance and slow in arranging the thoughts they wish to convey, but surely, we younger ones should give them time. They are not going to be with us very much longer, and surely a matured thought or desire should be listened to with patience and interest. Of course, in some instances, old age is irritating, but the dear old lady that I am to tell you about is—well, you shall judge for yourselves.

"It was my joy to have known her for a good many years, and I never once realized that she had become old. Old age with her had been a gradual, graceful, dignified transition, and there she sat, practically an invalid, with nothing of her great personality, vitality or charm lost. And why ? Because she was left to grow old naturally, not hustled into 'gumming up' by her children, but helped to go on doing the little things she had always loved doing.

"To listen to my dear old lady telling her experiences was one of my chief pleasures, for she had met many noted people and forgot no detail of the occasion she was relating, and did it in such a manner that the most trivial incident was of interest, and nothing made me feel so annoyed as, when she had carried one's mind along with hers to some great function she was describing, the maid came in with a note to be answered, or tea. One would willingly miss that meal to have heard the end of that delightfully told narrative.

"One thing which was a great disadvantage for her I sometimes suspected, but which was a joy to her friends, was that one could always find her. Being an invalid she had to live by routine ; so when one had a little piece of news one's first thought was to find her and share it—that speaks for her large sympathy, doesn't it ? It does not matter how small or petty the thing might be, that dear old lady was all eagerness to hear it, to sorrow or be glad over it, and her advice I took above anyone's in the world.

"She lived in the most delightful old converted farmhouse hundreds of years old, with a sweet old-world garden full of the dear old-fashioned flowers, and when she arrived there after being in town for the winter, her chief delight was to be wheeled round very slowly in her bathchair, accompanied by the gardener ; to hear how all the plants were progressing, if any have been moved or divided up, and to grieve over any that have died during her absence. Her herbaceous borders were a picture, and her gardener—whom she has had for many years—loves to give her a surprise by having some new little friend in the plant world to welcome her when she made her first round. I could go on for ever if I began describing the delights of her garden. For each season there was a riot of colour, and one could not make up one's mind which was the most beautiful ; but I know the roses were her greatest friends, and I doubt if one could see anything more exquisite in the early summer than the pergola that ran the whole length of her drive. Every climbing rose that ever climbed, I think lived there, and it almost seemed as if they so loved her praise that they put forth their very finest efforts to win more.

"Her grandchildren were another source of great pleasure to her. How they must have loved going to stay with her ; for there again she gave all her mind and sympathy to them whenever they were with her, played their games of cards with

them, had the piano played so that they could dance to her, and watched all they did with youthful interest. Then, when rather tired with their romps, they came to her with a book. It was indeed a lesson in elocution and the art of reading aloud to listen to her; one said with the children:

"'Do go on, Granny,' whenever the dear old lady paused for a moment's rest. I'm afraid one would have become thoroughly selfish if one had not loved her so.

"There were so many other charms I could mention. I have just had several horrid turbulent, tempestuous days; and when not able to sleep, I tried to think about the most peaceful spot I could picture, and my mind immediately went to my dear old lady, her sweet home, and the fragrance that surrounded her in her beautiful old age." . . .

* * * * *

The directors of the Galeries Georges Petit had seen a Show of mine at the Alpine Gallery in 1924 and arranged for an exhibition to take place two years later. During these two years I went to China, Japan and round the world, and brought back many new sketches.

A very charming young man who had sat at the table in the famous Gallery while the sketches were being arranged was always assuring me that it was difficult for an English person to have an Exhibition at that time, as the franc was nearly 200 to the £ sterling and I had fallen on an evil moment.

"What are you prepared to pay for the Press, madame?" asked the representative of the galleries.

"To pay for the Press?" I asked. "What do you mean?"

"Well, of course you must pay for the Press, or you will not have any notices."

My breath was literally taken away.

"I have written twenty books," I said, "I have held two large picture exhibitions in London and I have never paid anything to the Press in my life. We do not do that sort of thing in my country. Our Press is not bribed, it gives its own opinions."

"If you are not prepared to pay for the Press, madame, I am afraid your exhibition will be left unnoticed. More especially, as at the present moment when most of France thinks the deplorable position of the franc is due to England and America."

"I am sorry," I replied, "but I am not prepared to pay anything."

I was greatly honoured when Marshal Foch came to open my first Paris Exhibition in the famous Galeries Georges Petit in 1926. He did it with all the grace, the charm and ease with which those who knew this great soldier had for long been familiar. After the Exhibition I wandered for rest and change to Vichy. On my return to Paris I met Foch at my lovely Club, the Union Interalliée.

"Ah, madame, you are back in Paris," he exclaimed. "What a success your Exhibition was, madame."

"Largely due to your opening it, Monsieur le Maréchal. It was very sweet of you."

"Not at all, not at all," replied the dapper little gentleman. "That was a very small service to render to the mother of two valiant sons who died for their country, and one of whom lies for ever in France. Ah, madame, sad for you but proud also, and great for your country."

He said it all so simply and so sympathetically, but the words revealed the patriot, the soldier, and the kind heart. Foch was indeed a great man. No wonder Harley loved his Geneva interviews with him and always said what a great man and vital force he was for France. One felt that, above all, Foch was honest and not a scheming politician. The magnificent funeral with which his country and the representatives of other nations brought his mortal remains to the tomb beside Napoleon was evidence of the deep grief and loss which was so widely felt at the passing of this noble and gifted soldier.

The morning the Exhibition opened I boldly marched in with a full column of excellent critique from the Paris *Daily Mail* and another from a second English paper. The man at the table was surprised. But I had taken some pins and proudly pinned them up on the wall.

The Exhibition opened, its success assured because of Marshal Foch, the Grand Old Man of France (who died less than three years later). I slept happily that night, although I am an Englishwoman—and the English were not loved—and the franc was at 200. But the next morning when I went to the Gallery, behold my amazement, when pinned on the wall next my two long English notices were several shorter ones all equally plain, e.g. :

Le Temps
Le Gaulois

and half a dozen more French papers—about this poor English-woman's show—no credit to me—all due to the fact that Maréchal Foch had for the first time in his life opened an exhibition. His doing so had brought every possible man and woman from the street into the Gallery. For no sooner had this grand old gentleman's car drawn up outside than the population was moved to follow him, so even the French Press had kindly given me space and praise.

Two art collectors bought two of my sketches. One was the Marquis de Castellane and the other was a Dutchman.

A third was so admired by Foch—it was a bit of Rheims Cathedral, a soft effect of blues in the evening light—that I stamped a *vendu* tag on, and sent it to the dear old man after the show closed. He wrote the sweetest letter in reply. All is not gold that glitters, all was not gold in the pictures. But there was just something that pleased the critics and made people buy.

Imagine my amusement on returning to England a few weeks later to find that this old country of ours had started advertisements by paragraphs; Agencies. Several of them applied to me to ask whether, as I had only just returned to London after a long absence, I would not like to employ them?

I thanked them, but refused.

Many people know now what a Publicity Agent means since the Charlie Chaplin trial. Surely £100 for ten weeks' very hard and very excellent work was not too much for a woman secretary to ask? One thousand letters in a day. Poor soul. It is a new job, this Press Publicity. How times are changing.

* * * * *

After the War sketching was not lightly undertaken. There was no paper, and sometimes no paints. All the paper had been used up and the new supply was barely on the market. My most ridiculous plight was in India. The poor servant "bearer" could find nothing. Back and back he went to the bazaars.

"Anything will do," I said in despair, "but find something."

He found a sheet of brown paper and brought it forth in triumph. It was creased. Yes, but he would iron the creases out.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Brownie paper he bring Mr. Sahib's trewsers from London tailor. Memsahib."

So the brown paper wrapper from Saville Row made the background of a night scene in Agra.

It is wonderful how we can write or daub anywhere and under the weirdest circumstances—if we only try.

I loved to daub in brilliant sunshine with the clearest of atmosphere and the gorgeous colours of the people's robes, and yet it seemed as enthralling to paint the yellow haze of Paris or the grey gauze of London. Many water colours are all water and no colour, so I determined to reverse the idea. I have never had a painting lesson in my life, but I argued to myself that if a whole pound's worth of paints could not make me an artist nothing could. I've not much faith in talent or luck. It is hard work that does it, work and courage. The pleasure is in the labour, the striving; once attainment is reached it is time to begin something else. So, thus equipped, off I went on my travels and after an absence of two years returned with four hundred sketches.

France, Italy, Spain, Syria, Palestine, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, the Sudan and India. These were the lands in which I travelled. I was near Seville Cathedral at the time when a bomb exploded in it. In Madrid while I was sketching machine-guns were stationed outside my hotel. I continued daubing through the street shooting in Cairo (1919), and while there witnessed the arrival of Lord Allenby and Lord Milner. Palestine was still in troubled state while I was there the first time and I happened to land in Bombay in the middle of a widespread strike. Later on I went to Amritsar in the Punjab while it was still in a discontented condition, and made a picture of the Jullianwalla Bagh just a year after General Dyer's action.

Many of the sketches had some unusual association. The Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem was painted guarded by a British sentry whom I saw standing at his post bareheaded. A view of Jaffa was associated in my mind with red Bolshevik flags which were flying just as I painted them. The Mosque of St. Sophia while I was engaged on it was the only sacred building in Constantinople free from temporary habitation by returned Turkish prisoners (1920).

Then I went down the Nile beyond Fashoda and while at Khartoum found an appropriate incident for the brush in some sheikhs at prayer at Sir Lee Stack's garden-party at The Palace. Kosti, a native town on the White Nile, was remarkable for being extraordinarily hot, and in the picture I did my

best to suggest the great heat in the atmosphere, the whistling teal overhead and the hippos in the water. Another subject from this river that I found most interesting to record was a Shilluk's wedding. Women sorting figs at Smyrna was interrupted by an earthquake.

I managed, during a train stop, to dash off a picture of loading wheat in the Hauran. So it may be said that all these sketches "have their faces" in a peculiar sense.

I called them *Impression Sketches*.

* * * * *

On the night of Saturday, July 17th, 1926 (just after the Paris Show), Paris had become panicky. A mob had collected outside the Chambre des Députés, ready to duck or drown the members if they kept Herriot in power. It was as if a revolution was about to be born, for the whole city was agog with excitement and had the trouble started on that spot it would quickly have spread all over France.

The announcement that "Herriot was defeated" roused deafening cheers. Three hundred francs were given at café tables for an English pound that night and the market value had become 248 francs for a short time. No one could foresee the end.

Eight days and all was changed. The excited Frenchman was calmed. Chaos was averted. In a moment the danger zone was past. They could drink their Vichy free and in peace while the twelve franc bottle of wine at the hotel immediately cost sixteen.

"Why?"

"A cause du franc, madame."

As the wine had been in the cellar for months ready for the season its increase in price was merely amusing.

I have several times reflected on that period of anxiety. People in England, owing to the praiseworthy reticence of the Press generally, were unaware to what an extent it was a case of "touch and go". The French officials were well aware of the danger and had doubled and trebled the police outside the Senate and the Chamber when they saw vast mobs assembling outside ready to throw the Deputies in the river near by.

An eye-witness told me of the dexterity of the police in protecting Deputies as they emerged in the small hours of the morning from the Chamber.

Not one tittle of it appeared in the French Press for it knew

that if it made much of the conditions tourists would flee and their welcome money take wings with them, for at that time Paris was full of travellers. I heard vague surmises as to whether revolution might not be nearer than was generally supposed. To me, fresh from my experience in Russia, it was a terrible possibility to contemplate. Five years later our pound was down to 13s. od. and foreign tourists did not go to France, and France hoarded gold.

The French peasant is a wonderful person and his power of saving almost amounts to avarice. Like the Chinese, French peasants work long and hard. They live on their own farm produce, rarely buying meat, and have few wants. They seem to love old clothes. Everybody works in France.

Meantime, someone asks—How do you write and paint?

Well, I think I write best in bed where it is warm and comfortable and there is room to spread papers all over the sheets, or in a railway carriage where one knows no one will disturb one for a certain number of hours. But I am not sure I don't paint best at sea, ports, harbours, boats or skies—perched on the small camp stool that cost two shillings, and has accompanied me all over the world since I started painting in January, 1919, and was only given a new seat at Monte Carlo, September, 1931.

In a cabin one can sit on a stool, put everything out on the sofa, and the feeling of being alone, and remaining quite alone, is half the battle of work; no postman, no telephone, no tradesmen's inquiries, mean concentration. And yet my father worked in a hubbub in Harley Street with noisy children or pianos, and heeded nothing, so absorbed did he become with his scientific tasks. Or again, a car makes a little studio in which to daub, when people don't jump on to the step, or hang on to the hood and shake the dear little thing until the water flies everywhere. My little car is my only studio, otherwise I pack and unpack daily from a suit-case for want of space, and just dump down anywhere and begin. But it is not peaceful. However, the critics have been very kind as may be gauged from the following: on my second show, Paris was the third.

PRESS EXTRACTS, JULY, 1924.

Scotsman.—Sketching the World.—If there is one criticism of the show of Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's paintings and sketches at the Alpine Gallery which is justified, it is that there are too many of them. The rooms are hung with over four hundred. The worst of it is that all of them are worth looking at. But a visit is more a feast than a simple meal. Outside the gallery is a placard stating

that the pictures are "of the world", and they range through most of the countries of the globe. Mrs. Tweedie is not content with sketching bits of landscape merely. People and the lives they lead interest her more, and her technique is always vigorous and enlightening. Whether it be a view of natives working on an Indian plantation, where there is sunshine and light-heartedness or a scene in Japan after the recent earthquake, where all is pathos, there is vital human interest in what she puts on paper and canvas. It is a remarkable exhibition, and worth seeing.

The Times.—Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's great gifts are her quick sense of what is extremely characteristic or strikingly unusual in the places she visits. "Yokohama Bund after the Earthquake", "Singapore Island and Naval Base", "Tut-ankh-amen's Tomb on Entrance Day, March 25th, 1924", "The Greatest Dam in the World, Sennar", are examples picked at random. . . . The pen may not help the brush in technical matters, but it certainly prepares the way for its effective exercise; and Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, the artist, owes more to Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, the writer, than would appear on the surface. . . . The general technical improvement since her first exhibition three years ago is quite remarkable. . . . Nor is this true only of rapid notes of colour; it is true also of subjects—"Etruscan Arch, Perugia", "Baalbek, Corner of the Temple of Bacchus", and "Old Basque Farm", are examples which made heavy demands upon drawing and how to give the effect of solidity. . . .

The Morning Post.—Mrs. Alec-Tweedie represents her subjects boldly or with tenderness, according to their characters, and, seemingly, that picture-land of Japan has aroused her sense of decorative design. Note the charm of the grey "Dawn from my Window, Kyoto" (294). How cunningly she introduces the green and red stone lamps into the pearly scheme. At Nara on All Saints' Day some 3,000 of these lamps are lighted, and the effect must be exquisitely beautiful. Subtlety of tone distinguishes "Yokohama Bund, after the Earthquake" (305), and "The Tree of Life, Nara" (316) is delightful in colour and composition. Breadth and massive rhythm attract one in the "Peak and Junks, Hong Kong" (230), "Gibraltar" (267), while increased grip on architecture is shown in drawings such as the "Damascus Dervish's Mosque" (101), and the "Corner of the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbek" (100). These and all other impressions convince one of their truth to local and general conditions of each country in which she travelled. The scorching heat of the Egyptian desert is realized, for example, in the "Valley of the Kings" (119), the brilliant hues, the snowcapped mountains of Switzerland, the solitude of "The Dead Sea" (222) and the grey harmonies of the River Thames. If that other great traveller and writer, Marco Polo, had been gifted with Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's powers of draughtsmanship and colour he would have preserved for posterity many fine buildings that no longer exist. From an educational point of view her water colours are invaluable. . . .

The Daily Telegraph.—Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's Versatility. . . . For to the stay-at-home dreamer she reveals the manifold glimpses and impressions of life and scenes under foreign skies, and, with great daring, shows the Londoner what he probably misses seeing. This London section is a happy thought, and it is evident that the artist herself took refreshment from gazing on the portent of Chelsea chimneys; from seeing the Thames at afternoon tea-time on Parliament Terrace. . . .

The Westminster Gazette.—A Woman Traveller's Sketches. . . . But this energetic painter, who scours the world in search of subjects, has also achieved success in one of the most difficult ones, and that is London. It may be roughly said that if you can convey with a water-colour brush the splendour, the majesty, and the energy of London, you can attempt anything. It is one of the tests both of imagination and skill. Her "Custom House from London Bridge", the great white building massed against a grey-blue sky, is quite effective, as is "Evening on the Thames", with two fat barges against a serene sky. Perhaps the test piece of work, technically, in this varied show, which comprises almost every country in the world, is the "Distant View of Capri, from Sorrento", which shows a silver island faintly touched with gold rising out of a grey sea and topped by a sky of palest amber. But Mrs. Alec-Tweedie shows us also that she can express age-old solidity in the heavy pinkish brown columns of her "Temple of Karnak".

Daily Sketch.—Her Majesty the Queen visited Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's exhibition of impressionist sketches at the Alpine Galleries.

The Observer (P. G. Konody).—Her industry is only rivalled by her enthusiasm. . . . Her work has a spontaneous breadth and freshness of vision that augur well for the future, should she decide definitely to exchange the pen for the brush. . . . With reservation her sketches of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, the Sudan, India, Spain, Italy and Savoie are of great historical, topographical and ethnological interest.

Daily News.—Fine water colours.

* * * * *

How opinions vary. One day after a luncheon-party at Devonshire House Lord Moynihan was looking at my sketches: "You remind me so of Sargent," he said. "Has anyone told you that before?"

"Oh, yes, often," I replied. "And other people say the Pragues remind them of Prout and the Londons of Whistler. So you see I never know where I am; but the bulk of the people and the critics say—'How original', so sometimes I am allowed to be myself."

Two distinguished critics, Sir Martin Conway (now Lord Conway) and Mr. M. H. Spielmann, wrote about my sketches in 1929:

House of Commons,
25th November, 1929.

DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

How I did like your water colours. I liked them very much for their directness, their clear expression of a definite vision—definite and personal—of the thing seen; also for their happy brilliance of colour and for the local atmosphere differing with different climates and folk. A bit slapdash you are—agreeably so. These are my personal reactions to your work.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN CONWAY.

Folkestone, 25/12/29.

DEAR MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE,

Many thanks for sending me your charming postcard with its beautiful and poetic, yet true, view from your Piccadilly window.

How agreeably your art is progressing.

But if you will allow a so-called professional art critic to speak his mind in defence of yourself and your drawing—how hopelessly the scarlet signature throws out the whole composition and its tender effect. Place your graceful

finger over the honoured signature and see if you *do not* agree with, Yours sincerely, if impatiently and well-wishingly,

M. H. SPIELMANN.

A very happy Christmas and a delightful New Year to you.

The Moon picture, only some of the signatures were so aggressively red, made so, because so many people fail to see they are pictures painted by *ME*.

In acknowledgment of another drawing sent, Mr. Spielmann wrote :

Many thanks for the second edition of your New Year's drawing. *It is passed with approval.*

It is so long since we met. The last time, I think, at one of the Society of Authors' Pensions' Committee meetings, when you were always busying yourself so generously on behalf of the unlucky.

Having a picture show is almost as terrible as being a Company Director signing cheques. Poor me that had to sign 400 sketches before my Exhibition at the Alpine Gallery.

"How many pictures have you painted?" is a constant question. I really don't know. I kept a list up to a thousand but there have been four or five hundred since then. Good, bad, and indifferent since No. 1 in January, 1919, must total fourteen or fifteen hundred, the smallest on the back of a visiting card, to the largest 20 x 16.

There were several people in the Gallery when the Commissionaire suddenly rushed up the stairs to say: "There is a Royal motor at the door, Madame, and I think it is the Queen."

Downstairs he flew, and I crossed to the centre table, where the seller and secretary were sitting, and said :

"Stand up, quick. He thinks it is the Queen."

Hardly had I said it and turned towards the door, when Her Majesty was upon me. She was looking perfectly charming in pale grey velvet embroidered in steel, with a silver toque, wearing diamonds and amethysts; with her beautiful complexion and lovely grey hair. She really looked every inch the Queen.

"This is very kind of you, M'am," I stuttered, struggling with my curtsy, the excitement and delight.

"Not at all," she replied. "I remember the beautiful pictures that I ordered to be sent to Buckingham Palace when you gave your first exhibition, and this time I wanted to come and see them for myself upon the walls."

"What shall I show you, m'am?"

"Show me everything," she replied.

"Well, this side is Japan," I said as we turned to the left.

"Oh, yes. And is not that The Sacred Bridge to the Nikko Temple?"

"But I did not know Your Majesty had ever been to Japan."

"Alas, I have not," she replied. "But I know that red lacquer bridge so well in pictures that I feel it is quite an old friend."

"Then a little story that I heard while I was there might interest Your Majesty."

She dropped her lorgnettes and with those beautiful grey eyes, with the dark lashes, looked straight at me as I told her the story.

"They said when I spent Christmas Day there a few months ago that when the Prince of Wales had been there, the Japanese wished to do him a great honour and offered that he should cross the Sacred Bridge to the Royal Temple. An honour that had never been offered to anyone before."

"How interesting," she said. "And what happened?"

"Well, the story goes that he told them how immensely he appreciated the honour they had paid him in wishing him to cross the Sacred Bridge reserved for the Emperor and the Emperor alone. But although he appreciated the honour, he could not accept their courtesy and would go round by the road, like the ordinary pilgrims."

"Quite right. Quite right," she said. And a slight flush rose to her cheeks. She continued: "I *am* glad he did that."

Here was a touch of the Mother, and the Queen.

I can honestly say there was not one picture I painted during my two visits to China, 23-24-25, that was not painted under some danger. Civil war the first time—hostility to the foreigner the second time—Egypt, Palestine and Syria were all armed during my visits in 1919 and 1920. Amritsar and the Punjab were ablaze in 1921. The aftermath of war.

At Mukden I painted under difficulties. I never seemed to get sat down anywhere on that dear little camp stool than someone thought it unsafe and besought me to "Come 'ome, Missie."

It was as blazing hot on my second visit to Mukden, as it had been many feet of snow on my former one eighteen months before. In the shafts of the rickshaw the poor Chinaman, stripped to the waist, was perspiring as only a native can.

* * * * *

It is not so easy to sketch in a rickshaw. The only way to get straight is for the man to hold up the shafts of this glorified perambulator. And humanity wobbles. If he lets down the wooden poles to rest on the ground the wretched thing is all in the slant. In fact, it is almost impossible to keep in the seat at all. It is far easier on a camel. How little we Europeans realize, one goes everywhere and does everything in a rickshaw in the Far East. In Peking alone there are ninety thousand of such glorified baby carriages drawn by men. In Shanghai fifty thousand; I must own I never felt happy in them. I always felt rather ashamed for a man to be running me about. It lowers my self-respect. He is the human substitute for steam and power and very poorly paid. He starts at fifteen and is often dead from consumption at thirty. Poor rickshaw coolie.

To paint in Peking with a suit-case ready packed to make a bunk for the coast, with a shrieking mob of students yelling near by, to be always near some danger zone in those troubled years that followed the Great War, not only in Europe but all over the world. To sketch Sun Yat Sen's first demand for the Chinese Customs in Canton in January, 1924, from a river steamer and see the dead picked up on the shore next morning; shot dead by rioters and bandits during the night. In fact, mischief and excitement has added to the zest of trying to paint the world.

Sometimes one had to work in a tremendous rush; both are emphasized by the following little story:

Sitting on a stone elephant on the borders of Mongolia took my memory back to an episode in Ceylon. Within a quarter of an hour of arriving at that lovely island I was being driven away in a car with two strange men to the north. I had cabled from the sea that I wished to go on this expedition to see the Buried Cities and would require a good car, a good chauffeur, and a guide. The guide, because I remembered experiences where I had had a chauffeur with whom I could not converse one single word.

Stepping from the gangway a Cingalese presented himself before me, handed me an envelope with my name upon it, and said :

"I chauffeur."

"And I also ordered an English-speaking guide," I said.

"I speakee Engleesh : no driver-man can drive who no speakee Engleesh, Mem Sahib. Mem Sahib want no guide."

However I was not to be put off with that, and felt it would be safer to go with two strange men on an expedition of hundreds of miles into the wilds than with one alone. It was a wonderful experience, most interesting, and in every way enjoyable until one day when we motored through the elephant jungle to Anuradhapura.

It was my custom to have breakfast every morning at four o'clock and to start before five, so that we got a large part of our day's driving over before the great heat. This particular morning nobody woke me. No warm water arrived. No breakfast. I clapped my hands—the usual means of calling attention—but nobody came. I dressed. I clapped again, and feeling very angry finally emerged on the balcony in search of my two men. There was the driver.

"Why has nobody come to me ?" I asked.

"No can go, Mem Sahib."

"Nonsense, of course we can go, and we are very late."

"No can go, Mem Sahib," he reiterated.

"Why no can go ?"

"Deaf elephant, no can go."

"Nonsense," I replied, "if there is a deaf elephant he won't hear us."

Appealing to him was no good. The two men were adamant and the guide was obdurate. This was really insubordination. Finally I marched out and sat myself down in the car in the darkness. Still the men refused to move. The position was most uncomfortable. Cajolery would not stir them, threats would not move them, they merely repeated "No can go, deaf elephant."

Gradually the day began to dawn. It was nearing seven o'clock when suddenly the driver said :

"Go now, Mem Sahib."

He was as good as his word. The guide seized the horn and blew it in a way that made such a noise that it would awaken the dead. The driver turned all his lights full on and started that huge car at seventy miles an hour with me bouncing about



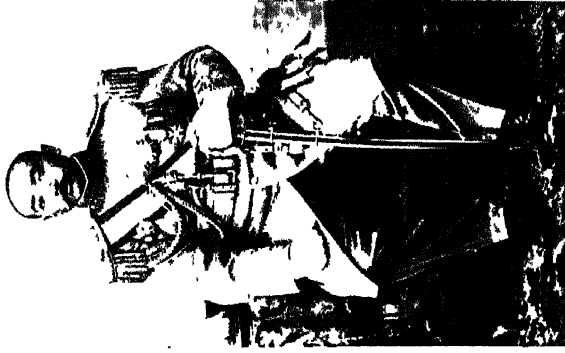
The Author in the Animal Avenue at the Ming Tombs near the Great Wall of Northern China, September, 1925.



This motor car and the servant were made entirely of cardboard and were burnt at a funeral.



The Author bidding the Buddhist Priest stand quiet at Sir Ernest Wilton's Temple Home, Western Hills, Peking.



The "Great War Lord" Marshal Chang-Tso-lin, foully murdered near Mukden, Manchuria, 1928.

like a pea inside it, as he tore wildly and madly through the elephant jungle.

For an hour or more we went like this, when we suddenly pulled up with brutal force on a river's bank. The car stopped, the men got out, produced pocket handkerchiefs, and mopped, not beads of perspiration but rivers of perspiration from their heads.

Weeks afterwards, when I was in Egypt, I received a Ceylon paper, with a heading "Death Elephant Shot", and then the truth of that very uncomfortable situation was unfolded.

The paper said that a Rover, that most dangerous animal, kicked out from his own herd, had lately killed eleven people in the neighbourhood of Anuradhapura. That gunmen had been pursuing him for weeks but he travelled so fast he had always eluded them, but at last this terror of the jungle had been killed.

So my "Deaf Elephant" which I had thought a nice peaceful old thing had really been one of the most wild Rovers of the northern jungle, and we three occupants of the car might have been added to the eleven he had already killed.

There is one thing about writing, it requires no paraphernalia. A block and a pencil can write a book, and a block and a pencil very often do write a book.

Scribbling rough notes is a simple job, and they are alive because they are first impressions. It's the thought and revision, comparison and completion that is the real task, the balancing of words and thoughts.

Other people may work quite differently and I hope they do. For a book is to me a perfect agony of anxiety. One long striving to do one's best. Six months' work may be an average, with nearly as much preparation in a foreign land.

A feverish, sleepless, silly, stupid anxiety to do one's best, and not lose any little reputation one has gained, brings me to a state of misery before the galleys, and proof sheets, and proof illustrations are out of my hands, and the mountain of work lies before me in a neat, tidy-looking volume. Perhaps I was never meant to write a book, because I have always been too over anxious not to disappoint those wonderful unknown friends—the public.

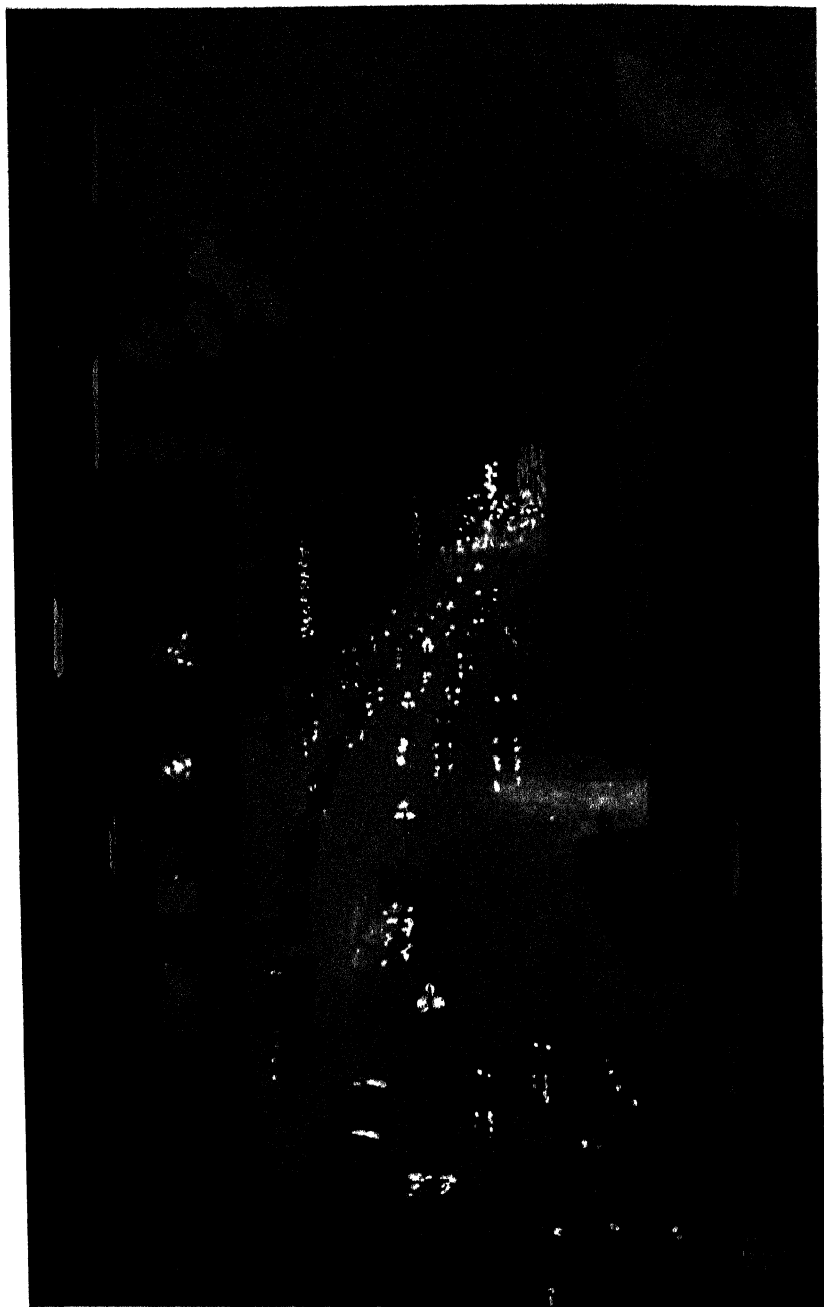
It is a dreadful thing to be burdened with a feeling of super-responsibility to one's work, one's sex, and one's country. Always to wish to do better may be an incentive, but it is a terrible irk.

And the conditions have sometimes been almost intolerable. I finished *America as I saw it* for the *New York Times* between New York and Buenos Aires with a cabin temperature seldom below 100 degrees. It was typed daily by an excellent and helpful steward.

I finished *An Adventurous Journey* between Japan, Canada and London with a severely damaged leg which was risking amputation. *Mainly East* was written partly in Central Africa on barges or camels, in the desert, or among the temples of Egypt, or in a house-boat on the Ganges shooting crocodiles.

For *Hyde Park, Its History and Romance* I buried my nose in the British Museum, and so on, and each book on an average took about a year from A to Z.

Making a sketch is a sinecure to writing a book. The sketch takes less hours than the book takes months. The sketch can be torn up and need never haunt its producer. But a book goes to the far corners of the earth, to Public and Private libraries the world around, and there it stands for years to taunt its producer with lack of power, or accuracy, or proportion, or even a split infinitive. To aspirants to better creation an old hand merely says "Try and try again," and don't jib at a twelve or fourteen hour day's work which may bring throbbing, vitalizing pleasure from the paint brush. Personally I never possessed a studio or an easel and work anywhere and everywhere. One can find considerable joy also from the pen. Work does bring its reward, there is no doubt about it.



Piccadilly Circus from my Roof Garden.

CHAPTER XIV

MY EMPIRE PAGEANT

One of the biggest things of my life—How the idea of my Pageant came to me—How I walked into the Albert Hall and took it—A good omen—A "rough idea" of the Programme—My chief co-operators—*Beaten*—The Poster that could never be used and how John Hassall helped me—Extracts from a note-book—Nobody lost a penny but myself.

I WALKED into the Albert Hall on October 29th, 1929, and took it—yes, took the Albert Hall for twelve days of 16 performances. And the Albert Hall holds 10,000 people.

I "pencilled in" as they call it provisionally for October 13th-25th, 1930, because I had heard a whisper the Imperial Conference would be sitting at that time, and I wanted to do my bit.

From October 29th, when I took the hall, to June 30th, 1930—nearly eight months—I bore the entire brunt, all the financial responsibility, all the organization, all the work and all the worry. The Empire, first and last. That is my motto. The British Empire may save the world.

In the late Autumn of 1930 the first Imperial Conference might be held in London. That seemed to me the moment for a great Empire rally. I was determined to bring one about.

Hence my plan for a great Empire Pageant.

The Pageant I dreamed should be one of the very biggest outside things of my life. I would give all my time and strength in memory of our million fallen. Perhaps, in a way, my war work was bigger, but this Pageant was solely and entirely on my own shoulders, even to the paying. Socialism did for it, and it nearly did for me.

All my life Hyde Park has fascinated me. My love of its open spaces is not merely general but personal.

Born in Harley Street, married at York Terrace, now settled on the top of Devonshire House, I have lived most of my life right in the Heart of the Empire.

Few have travelled more, as said before. Over a hundred

thousand miles, even since the day of the Armistice. Once round the world from West to East, and once from East to West, with side tracks from the Himalayas to Central Africa, and from Siberia to Java and Malay.

"Some travelling." But Hyde Park, its history and its wonderful romance,* still enthral me, and it was this that inspired me to plan my great "Heart of Empire" Pageant at the Albert Hall in 1930.

Opposite is what I called, on one of the first printed announcements, "a rough idea" of the programme, with a list of the patrons. It looked promising enough, did it not? Every branch of the Empire was represented. Every one of the arts and sciences.

* * * * *

It was at ten minutes to nine on May 24th, after the first instalment had been paid, that I was called upon by telephone definitely to commit myself to engaging the Hall. I did so. I telephoned to the Manager, to that effect, before the clock struck nine.

The deed was done. I was responsible for one thousand pounds for the twelve days. Me alone; I hadn't wavered one moment. The thing had gone far—there was £3,000 promised by guarantors, over £500 banked for boxes—but lose the hall I could not. So I took it. Then my knees shook.

Well—it was done.

And then a placard went up at 10 o'clock near the Ritz: "She's done it"—A woman had reached Australia on Empire Day at dawn—a new link of Empire forged by an amazing and fearless girl. . . . It seemed a good omen.

* * * * *

Yes, a thousand performers had promised their support—hundreds of them were going to give their services free because the object was charity. I cannot be grateful enough for the great help of Mr. T. C. Fairbairn, who is known beyond all else for his wonderful production of *Hiawatha* at the Albert Hall, which is put on every year to crowded houses for a fortnight; or to Mr. Frank Lascelles, another great English Pageant producer, for his co-operation in adapting his wonderful Indian Durbar as part of the Pageant: in fact, the two greatest Pageant

* "Hyde Park—Its History and Romance." Cheap revised Edition, 1930 (Besant, 3s. 6d.).

Rough idea of programme.Non-political—Non-sectarian.

GREAT PAGEANT
ROYAL ALBERT HALL
HEART OF EMPIRE
(1930)

MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE

who wrote the book,

“HYDE PARK—its History and Romance”

from which this Pageant is taken.

HEART OF EMPIRE

Arranged and produced by - - T. C. FAIRBAIRN
Indian Durbar - - - FRANK LASCELLES
Scenario by - - - BOYD CABLE
Music arranged by - - - PHILIP CATHIE

SPECIAL NIGHTS:—October 13th, FIRST NIGHT; 14th, THE LORD MAYOR; 15th, CANADA; 16th, AUSTRALIA; 17th, NEW ZEALAND; 18th, Matinée—N. Ireland, Channel Isles, Isle of Man, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta. Evening—AFRICA; 20th, INDIA; 21st, WEST INDIES, etc.; 22nd, LEARNED SOCIETIES; 23rd, ASIATIC CROWN COLONIES, Aden, Irak (Mandate), Palestine (Mandate), Seychelles, Sarawak, British N. Borneo; 24th, CEYLON, HONG KONG, MALAYA; 25th, Matinée—; Evening—UNITED SERVICES.

(The Imperial and Round Table Conferences will be sitting.)

Surplus to Charity.

PATRON:—H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT, K.G.

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH OF KAPURTHALA.
HER HIGHNESS THE DOWAGER MAHARANEE OF
COOCH BEHAR.

THE MAHARAJAH OF BURDWAN.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUIS OF ZETLAND.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUIS OF ABERDEEN AND
TEMAIR (late Governor-General of Canada).

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUIS OF READING (late
Viceroy of India).

THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF DERBY.

COL. THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF DENBIGH.

EARL OF CLARENDON (South Africa).

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET EARL JELlicoe OF SCAPA.

THE COUNTESS HAIG.

EARL PEEL.

THE VISCOUNTESS BRYCE.

FIELD-MARSHAL THE VISCOUNT ALLENBY.

THE VISCOUNT WILLINGDON (Governor-General of
Canada).

VISCOUNT D'ABERNON (late British Ambassador).

THE VISCOUNT CRAIGAVON (Prime Minister of
Northern Ireland).

FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT PLUMER.

VISCOUNT BRENTFORD (late Home Secretary).

LORD LAMINGTON.

LORD ABERCONWAY (Chairman of John Brown).

LORD CARSON.

LORD MESTON (Government of India).

LORD DANESFORT.

LORD DAWSON OF PENN.

LORD LLOYD (formerly High Commissioner for
Egypt).

LORD MELCHETT (Chairman of Imperial Chemicals).

GENERAL LORD BADEN-POWELL (Chief of Boy
Scouts).

LORD MOYNIHAN (President Royal College Sur-
geons).

AIR-MARSHAL LORD TRENCHARD.

THE RT. HON. PHILIP SNOWDEN (Chancellor of
the Exchequer).

[P.T.O.]

(Continued from previous page.)

HON. VINCENT MASSEY (High Commissioner of Canada).

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GRANVILLE RYRIE (High Commissioner of Australia).

SIR THOMAS WILFORD (High Commissioner of New Zealand).

SIR ATUL CHATTERJEE (High Commissioner for India).

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR NEWTON MOORE (Former Premier of Western Australia).

HON. SIR FRANCIS NEWTON (High Commissioner for S. Rhodesia).

THE RT. HON. SIR L. WORTHINGTON EVANS (late Minister for War).

THE RT. HON. L. S. AMERY (late Colonial Secretary).

THE RT. HON. S. M. BRUCE (former Prime Minister of Australia).

THE RT. HON. SIR MAURICE DE BUNSEN (late Special Ambassador to South America).

THE RT. HON. SIR EDWARD CLARKE.

THE RT. HON. SIR ROBERT HORNE (late Chancellor of the Exchequer).

THE RT. HON. EDWARD SHORTT (Film Censor).

THE RT. HON. SIR JOHN SIMON (Chairman of Indian Statutory Commission).

COL. THE RT. HON. SIR LESLIE WILSON (late Governor of Bombay).

THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD MAYOR.

THE HON. LADY BAILEY (Airwoman).

MRS. STANLEY BALDWIN.

THE LADY MAYORESS (LADY (WILLIAM) WATERLOW).

MRS. PHILIP SNOWDEN.

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR CHARLES MADDEN.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR CLAUD JACOB.

LADY ALLARDYCE (Newfoundland).

SIR JOHN SANDEMAN ALLEN (Chairman of Royal Empire Society).

J. B. BODY, Esq.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN ROSE BRADFORD (President of Royal College of Physicians).

AIR VICE-MARSHAL SIR SEFTON BRANCKER (Director of Civil Aviation).

SIR HARCOURT BUTLER (late Governor of Burma).

SIR WILLIAM BRAGG (President of Royal Institution).

ADMIRAL SIR ERNLE CHATFIELD.

SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN.

SIR CECIL CLEMENTI (Governor of Straits Settlements).

LADY CUNYNGHAME (Chairman of Unionist Canvassing Corps).

S. A. COURTLAND, Esq.

COL. SIR CHARLES CLOSE (President of Royal Geographical Society).

SIR MARTIN CONWAY.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR PERCY COX.

REAR-ADMIRAL BARRY DOMVILLE.

SIR FRANK DYSON (Astronomer Royal).

ADMIRAL SIR SYDNEY FREMANTLE.

MRS. ROBERT FLEMING.

SIR PHILIP GIBBS.

GEN. SIR ALEX GODLEY (Governor of Gibraltar)

DR. FRANCIS W. GOODBODY (University College London).

DR. DOUGLAS GRAY (late Peking Legation).

P. J. HANNON, Esq.

SIR CECIL HARCOURT-SMITH.

SIR THOMAS HOLLAND (Principal of Edinburgh University and President of British Association).

THE VERY REV. W. R. INGE (Dean of St. Paul's).

SIR ARTHUR KEITH (late Curator of the Royal College of Surgeons).

FRANK LASCELLES.

PHILIP DE LASZLO, Esq. (President Royal Society of British Artists).

SIR WILLIAM LLEWELLYN (President of the Royal Academy).

MAJOR A. A. LONGDEN (Sec. General Italian Art Exhibition).

SIR EDWIN LUTYENS (Architect).

LT.-GEN. SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH.

SIR RONALD MACLEAY (British Ambassador to Argentine).

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR NEILL MALCOLM.

SIR JOHN MAFFEY.

SIR CRAWFORD MAXWELL (Governor of Northern Rhodesia).

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE McMUNN.

SIR MAX MUSPRATT (Liverpool).

THE VERY REV. W. FOXLEY NORRIS (Dean of Westminster).

SIR MICHAEL O'DWYER (late Governor of the Punjab).

REAR-ADMIRAL OLIPHANT.

HON. SIR JAMES PARR (late High Commissioner for New Zealand).

SIR BERNARD PARTRIDGE ("Punch").

SIR STANLEY REED.

PERCEVAL RIDOUT, Esq.

GENERAL SIR BENJAMIN ROBERTSON.

SIR EDWARD DENISON ROSS (Chairman, School Oriental Languages).

SIR RONALD ROSS (Director Ross Institute).

SIR ERNEST RUTHERFORD (President Royal Society).

SIR ECCLES SNOWDEN (Agent-Gen. for Tasmania).

SIR WILLIAM SOULSBY.

THE LADY SOUTHWARK.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR PERCY SYKES.

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM THWAITES (late Commander in Chief Rhine Army).

PROFESSOR DR. JOCELYN THORPE (President Chemical Society).

CAPT. SIR BEECHCROFT TOWSE (National Institution for the Blind).

REAR-ADMIRAL HUON TWEEDIE.

AIR-MARSHAL SIR VYRELL VYVYAN.

GENERAL SIR REGINALD WINGATE (late Lieut.-Governor of the Sudan).

SIR ARTHUR YAPP (Y.M.C.A.)

Masters in England were helping me. Mr. Philip Cathie had excellent plans for the English music, including work by Elgar, Sullivan, Purcell and German; and the scenario of "Boyd Cable"; Miss Euphan MacLaren had offered to co-operate with her ballet of two hundred; and Mr. Arthur Fagge with his London Choral Society and its six hundred members.

Yes, it was a perfectly huge undertaking, one thousand performers, and nearly 2,000 costumes, and after all the kindness and co-operation shown over this great Empire Pageant, and the kindly help of Miss Madge Husey, those were awful days in August, 1930—when the whole political world was awry and the Socialist Government was opposing everybody and everything—Canada was having a general election—I had to decide whether to carry on still further and go into rehearsal on September 1st or abandon the whole thing and sit back—BEATEN.

* * * * *

Among the hundred other things, I had painted a poster. It's fun to try one's hand at everything—but Roman soldiers beat me. I didn't know anything about what Roman soldiers wore on their heads or how long were their staves; but I did know that Roman soldiers landed 2,000 years ago where the Houses of Parliament now stand.

Anyway, I did the poster, and worried over the soldiers who were wanted on the bottom part. So off I went to John Hassall, that great master of poster work. "Can you draw a Roman soldier?" I asked.

"I hope so," he laughed. So I unrolled my poster and said: "I want three men getting out of a boat down there at the bottom left-hand corner."

He took up a block and a pencil and before I could say "Oh," the three men and the boat were on the block.

"Excellent, just what I want." So I left my poster behind and was to call again next day. I did. There were the three men properly blocked in.

"How much?"

"Nothing. It is your poster, your thought, not mine——"

However, we split the difference to make me happy. As I was leaving, I remembered it was not signed.

"Come, come," he laughed, "I really can't claim your poster but I'll sign it if you do the same."

And so we both signed our co-operative poster. "Such a thing has never been done before," he declared.

But the poor poster was not to be wanted, although it was accepted by the Underground Railways, and also for the omnibuses, before that fateful day, when I gave up the Pageant and acknowledged myself beaten.

* * * * *

Yes, all my efforts were to be in vain. I shall not weary my readers by telling them in detail how those plans failed.

I find this note for July 21st, 1930 :

"To-morrow will be final. It is the last chance for the Pageant unless I risk £6,000 myself. It is nine months since I took the hall. . . .

"The Government seems determined to have no Pageant of Empire.

"The Government are frightened of it. Passfield & Co. want to destroy the Empire, and Henderson is giving it away in chunks. Egypt is in riot, gun-boats on their way to Alexandria, people shot. India is still terribly disturbed with hundreds dead, and Palestine is ready to burst out again.

"Nearly two million unemployed, and the Imperial Conference packing up to come to London from the far lands for their 4-yearly Conference, to find The Empire forgotten.

"Sleepless nights and hard days have been my companions for months. One set-back after another has had to be overcome, but it seems almost as if they would overcome me at last—No. I'll try again.

"One of my troubles and eye-openers has been the poverty of my friends. Taxes, doles, bad years in Australia with drought and awful Socialist taxation and money leaving the country. Millionaire friends in England, in coal, or steel or shipping or engines literally not able to lay their hands on cash.

"Some of the letters (private, of course) have amazed as well as grieved me. A man who employed 25,000 men cut down to 8,000 and working without any margin of profit even at that. Every country creeping upon us. Our exports down, our imports up. We, the dumping ground of the world. Boots, gloves, motors, lace, hand-bags, drugs, cottons and woollens all dumped on our shores. The world protected, and we still blithering fools of Free Traders. I believe if we had Empire Protection we should be the wealthiest and richest country in the world

again in ten years, or perchance in five, and all this affects the Pageant."

* * * * *

Nobility and landed proprietors without any cash.

"What will to-morrow say?"

"Dare I carry on, or should I shut down?"

* * * * *

I never bought a hat or coat or dress for eleven months; one pair of shoes and a few gloves only, or some renovations of old evening gowns.

I never entertained anyone, not even to a luncheon-party, for eleven months.

I never bought a theatre ticket or a cinema ticket.

I never slept one night away from home. Every penny that could be saved was honourably saved toward expenses. I saved nearly a third of my income by real self-sacrifice in the cause of Empire Unity. . . . And I sold out capital as well.

For eleven months I worked all day and stayed awake half the night over that Pageant. . . .

The well-known Dr. Porges, of Marienbad, once said when upbraiding me for doing too much: "Two hours' *creative* work—such as writing—is as tiring as six hours' routine, or twelve hours' manual labour." Well—well—

At that time Ramsay Macdonald, a sectional party man, had not yet become a world-wide politician of wisdom—no one knew the heights to which he would attain, or how the word Empire would later grip him by the heart. At that time the Socialist Party did not want an Empire.

In those broiling days at the end of August, with my thermometer shaded on the roof garden at ninety-three—in those horrible days of final relinquishment of my dream—little yellow butterflies were dancing in and out of the antirrhinums and marigolds, so many feet above Piccadilly, just as they might do in a country garden. Peaceful little butterflies—and I had not known one proper night's sleep for many months.

On August 20th, 1930, I shut down beaten—I could not allow one thousand people to go into rehearsal on September 1st as arranged. Honestly, it took more pluck to give in than to go on, but everything proved that it was wisdom to give in. BEATEN.

* * * * *

Friends were very kind after I had been compelled to abandon the whole scheme—at any rate, for 1930.

Three of the most sympathetic letters that reached me were from old Sir Edward Clarke, Lord Lloyd and W. K. Haselden, the caricaturist, in reply to notes from me returning their cheques—all three of them so distressed over the thought of my heavy financial loss. Not one single soul was a penny the worse for my patriotism. I lost money, time, and health; but that was "my pigeon" as the Chinese say. And most sincerely I thank my friends for their help and kindness.

But it was shown a few months later that the Socialists had known at that very time that they were bankrupt although they did not publicly acknowledge it for months.

Well, that is all that I have to say about my Pageant. I did my best, but the Fates and the momentary triumph of Socialism and an epidemic of weak-kneed politics were against me. No use groaning or moaning over things.

"Honnête homme s'éloigne et ne dit mot."

And, after all, I have sown the seed. And it is all labelled and docketed in a huge trunk in the basement.

Perhaps some great organizer will bring that seed one day to flower.

Having mentioned one flying woman in this chapter, here's a tribute to another.

The real woman pioneer aviator was dear quiet, shy, little Lady Bailey.

"However did you do it?"

"Well, you see, I have a Moth, and I'm very fond of my Moth, so I put her nose south, and we just went, she and I, to the Cape. Then I turned her nose north and came up the other side of Africa to London. That's all."

And she smiled sweetly.



Shilluks on the White Nile.
Splendid Warriors often seven feet high.

CHAPTER XV

IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON

A House of Lords Lunch—The Speaker's Party—Farewell to Lord and Lady Willingdon—St. George's Day—The London Season—Authors' Club Guest—How I disobeyed Lord Allenby—Royal Institute re-opening—Sir Arthur Keith—Royal Literary Fund Dinner—Cunninghame-Grahame and Me—Galloping round Tangiers Bay—Sir Percy Cox's guest at Empire Day Dinner (photo comes in here)—A dear friend—The Dowager Maharanee of Cooch Behar—How she received the Crown of India—Dr. Brüning's visit—My Mother and Von Liebig—At Court again—Alas, no Hock cup—The Sultan of Muscat and King Amanullah—Kipling Society Luncheon—Poets Club Dinner—A nice letter—The Buckingham Palace Garden Party—Overseas League 21-year-old Dinner—Our Prince of Wales—Albert Hall Disarmament Meeting—Not down and not out—At many parties—Some private entertainments—A new Government—And less unemployed.

IT is a wonderful thing, our London season. It begins in April and ends in July. In twelve short weeks the babe is born, staggers to its feet, attains a lusty growth, over-eats and under-sleeps, and goes out of existence a maimed, miserable old cripple with many varied experiences.

* * * * *

Lady Bax-Ironside rang up to know if by any chance I was going to the House of Lords luncheon. As I was, she called for me in her car.

It seemed rather exciting to receive an invitation to lunch at the House of Lords, but I did not know how really exciting it was until I asked a policeman at the entrance if women often lunched there.

"Never before, madam," he replied, "this is the first time."

We were only about a dozen women and about a hundred and fifty men.

It was given in connection with the Persian Exhibition at Burlington House and the Persian Conference then on in London. My neighbour on my right hand was head of the Hermitage Museum in Petrograd. He spoke most perfect French but no English. A very charming, cultured man who extolled the

marvels of our museums, and private collections in England. I did not like to ask him much about Russia, but I told him I was in Moscow five years ago. "It is much changed," he said. "It is always changing and improving." And so from that moment I thought I had better be quiet on the horrors I had seen and the worse horrors experienced in Siberia. On my left was a Swede, with whom I discussed Stockholm, and beyond him was a Frenchman. Opposite me was another Russian, a particularly brilliant man, who thought England possessed the finest art treasures in the world.

The House of Lords on a dull January day was not looking its best, as it was not in Session and all the nice chairs were covered in Holland wrappings. However Lord Lamington, who was in the chair, offered to take the Delegates round after the feast, and I noticed a great many of them went. All honour to someone, we had plum pudding for all these foreigners and excellent plum pudding too with brandy sauce; so they were delighted. All my neighbours were anyway. We lunched in the Lords' dining-room with its queer coloured walls. One approaches the House through the charming room with scarlet leather fittings where the Peers debate, and next to the chamber where I had seen the much-discussed Brangwyn pictures with Lord Brentford a few months before. Personally, I loved the Brangwyn pictures, and as they were an order from the Baldwin Government it seemed perfectly appalling that the Socialist party should turn them out.

An At Home at the Speaker's House, Palace of Westminster, is always a charming sight, but what a difficult spot for a party of six hundred and fifty people. It simply poured in torrents. I dined with Colonel and Mrs. de Satgé—he an official of the Government—in their charming house with its Gainsborough and Lawrence portraits of his forbears. In a deluge we left. The line of cars began at Storey's Gate. No one could get out and walk, as usual, so we all crawled into the big courtyard of the Houses of Parliament, and even more slowly got through the arch single file into the still tinier yard where Mr. Speaker lives, and also Admiral Sir Colin Keppel, and where the entrance to the Ladies' Gallery is hidden.

Up the stairs, and then a blaze of uniforms and medals, and above all the loveliest clothes known to modern man, the black velvet Court suit with steel buttons and sword, silk stockings and pumps and a lace cravat. A man looks his best

in an English Court suit. There had been a levee for men after the second Parliamentary dinner of the Session, so there stood thirty or forty of them at the top of the stairs, all dressed up and waiting for their wives. No one ever graced a Court suit better than the present Mr. Speaker. He is so tall—only beaten that night by Lord Ampthill and perhaps Lord Trenchard.

Yes, a party at the Speaker's House is a pretty show, but arriving and leaving are a pretty mess on a drenching night, which wickedly had followed a perfect day with bulbs pushing their little heads up in the parks.

As we left, the pompous servants in the hall were calling out for cars in stentorian tones.

"Mr. Baldwin" was roared forth into the darkness, and the very next car was Mr. Lloyd George's; the cars arrived almost simultaneously, and Miss Megan looked so tiny as she rose from a seat in the hall and scuttled out in a very non-M.P. manner.

* * * * *

Then came the farewell party to the Willingdons at India House. They have made a great success in India since then.

A brilliant party but oh, such a bad place to give one in. Quite new and quite wrong, for there is no big room for a reception and more lifts are required.

Both Willingdons were charming to me. She looked years younger than in India. All diamond tiara and smiles. He very grey but fully determined to meet all Indian difficulties.

All the women wore white gloves again. They have come to stay it seems, after nearly twenty years.

* * * * *

April 24th was Saint George's Day. I dined with the St. George's Day Society. There, for the third time in one week, I met Lord Jellicoe—first at the Japanese Embassy, then at Lady Southwark's party at Claridge's, and now at the St. George's Day Dinner. One of those curious things that happen sometimes.

"Why don't you run out to Cape Town and stay with your cousin Admiral Hugh Tweedie? He is Commander in Chief of the African Fleet and you would enjoy yourself." What a live cheery soul Jellicoe is with his small body and kindly face. By a curious coincidence two cousins of mine were appointed A.D.C. to the King in the same year. Admiral Hugh Tweedie, now Commander in Chief in South African waters as Naval attaché, and Colonel Sydney Muspratt, now Major-General at the India Office, as Military attaché.

Naturally, the position of A.D.C. to the King is a most coveted distinction and a great honour. They are of course bound to attend all sorts of great functions, levees, drawing-rooms, and other official ceremonies.

* * * * *

Nothing is more difficult in rambling recollections than to know which lane to ramble down, which turning to take, what to put in and, far more important, what to leave out. In every book much more is left out than is ever put in. In fact, a volume is a matter of selection. Suppose we wander on through the London season of 1931. On opening the list of engagements I find that three months covers a heterogeneous collection, scattering over different interests in all parts of the world—from royalty to beggars.

On May 20th luck popped me down next to the Chairman (Sir Basil Clarke) of the Authors' Lodge Seventeenth Ladies' Evening at the Monico Restaurant. An invitation had reached me some weeks before from Sir Basil to be the lady guest of the evening. I accepted the invitation. Then came the everlasting demand for a speech, by return of post. The usual refusal followed by a further letter begging me to come even without the speech. On the other side of me sat Frank Lascelles, who, was referred to a few pages back in connection with the pageant.

Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle kindly spoke for me, and Sir Basil Clarke was so good as to say, in referring to my own presence, that "it always refurbishes hope to see among us people who have 'got there'," and referred to me as "that famous woman, Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, well known as a writer, painter, traveller and philanthropist." I felt some regret that I could not make any reply, but I was fortified by the thought that I had dared to disobey Lord Allenby. It was at a dinner at the Royal Central Asian Society when I was sitting next to Lord Allenby, who was in the Chair. (The time before I had been sitting next Lord Meston when he was in the Chair, so I am altogether thoroughly spoilt.)

Officials had been speaking on China, Japan and Korea, when Allenby turned round and said: "Get up and say something."

"No," I replied.

"Don't be silly. Get up and say something. You know all these countries."

"No, I won't speak," I replied.

"Be a sport," he continued, "and get up."

"No, I won't," I repeated and, wagging my finger at him, I repeated: "I won't, I won't, I won't."

"You are very naughty." Whereupon in his deep and ponderous voice he said half-standing: "I have a very bad woman sitting beside me. She knows about all these places and she absolutely refuses to get up and tell us her views on them."

Naturally everyone roared with laughter. It was very trivial, but I think they were all amazed at my daring to disobey "The Bull" the great Field-Marshal.

As we left the room, I laughed to dear Lady Allenby with her sweet, almost ethereal face, and said: "I have actually dared to disobey your husband."

"I saw you," she said. "I saw you, and I wondered which would win."

"I did," I said, triumphantly.

"There are not many people who have disobeyed my husband," she laughed. But then we are all very jolly and informal at the dining Club of the Royal Central Asian Society.

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On May 8th we begin with Science, for on that date occurred the reopening of the famous Royal Institution in Albemarle Street, of which one of my oldest and dearest friends, Sir William Bragg, is President. Before me is his very modest reply to a letter congratulating him on his being awarded the honour of the Order of Merit. "Really," he says, "it's marvellous how kind my friends are." Sir William, who is universally popular in the scientific world, is a worthy successor to Sir William Dewar in the Presidentship of the Royal Institution and a fitting successor in every way to Faraday and Huxley. Another distinguished Fellow is Sir Arthur Keith, whose Rectorial Address at Aberdeen, in which he described war as "Nature's pruning-hook", caused such a sensation.

Now let us turn to the Royal Literary Fund Dinner, another of the great events of the London season, which may always be counted upon for a brilliant assemblage and for excellent speeches. The 1931 dinner was no exception. Indeed, the speeches both of the Duke of York, who was the chief guest, and of the President of the Society, Lord Crawford and Balcarres, were noteworthy for grace, lucidity and directness. My seat at

the top table brought me as neighbours on either side that great gentleman and friend of forty years, Lord Aberconway, and that equally great gentleman and fine public servant, the Earl of Ancaster, and from this favourable point of vantage I could look down the tables and see a numerous company of old and distinguished friends of many years' standing.

Naturally, as the Duke of York was the guest of honour, the world and his wife wanted to be there, and some 700 people crowded into the Hotel Victoria, Northumberland Avenue.

Yes, I really felt rather proud of myself. Here was I, not the wife of anyone, but just I—me myself at the top table and only six seats from the Chairman, the Duke of York. Here a woman's work was recognized. Not her husband's titles or money—just she herself. Another fight won for the acknowledgment of my own sex. This was the second time in a few weeks that this scribbler had found herself seated at the top table as she herself and not as the wife of some gentleman of title or fame.

The occasion was the 141st anniversary of the foundation of the Royal Literary Fund and in his opening speech the Duke of York outlined the history of the Fund and the difficulties overcome in the early days by its founder, Mr. David Williams.

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About this date, Dorchester House, the new hotel, had just opened its doors on the site of America's famous Embassy.

What a change. Dear old Dorchester House in Park Lane, with its small carriage drive, its majestic pictures, and wonderful reception-room, had been pulled down.

Strange as it may seem, I once played the part of hostess in Dorchester House. It was at the Eugenic Congress referred to elsewhere.

At the opening of the hotel Mrs. Arthur Macdonald gave a luncheon party. Miss Lucy Kemp-Welch was one of our number and she was admiring Cunninghame-Grahame's head opposite us.

"I should like to paint it," she said.

So I asked him to sit for fifteen minutes. He did, and the excellent result is shown in the illustration facing page 235.

What years have gone by since Cunninghame-Grahame and I first met. It was in Morocco.

He certainly was the finest horseman I ever saw and he is kind enough to say that I was one of the best horsewomen he ever knew. A case of throwing bouquets at one another. One



Mrs. Alec-Tweedie

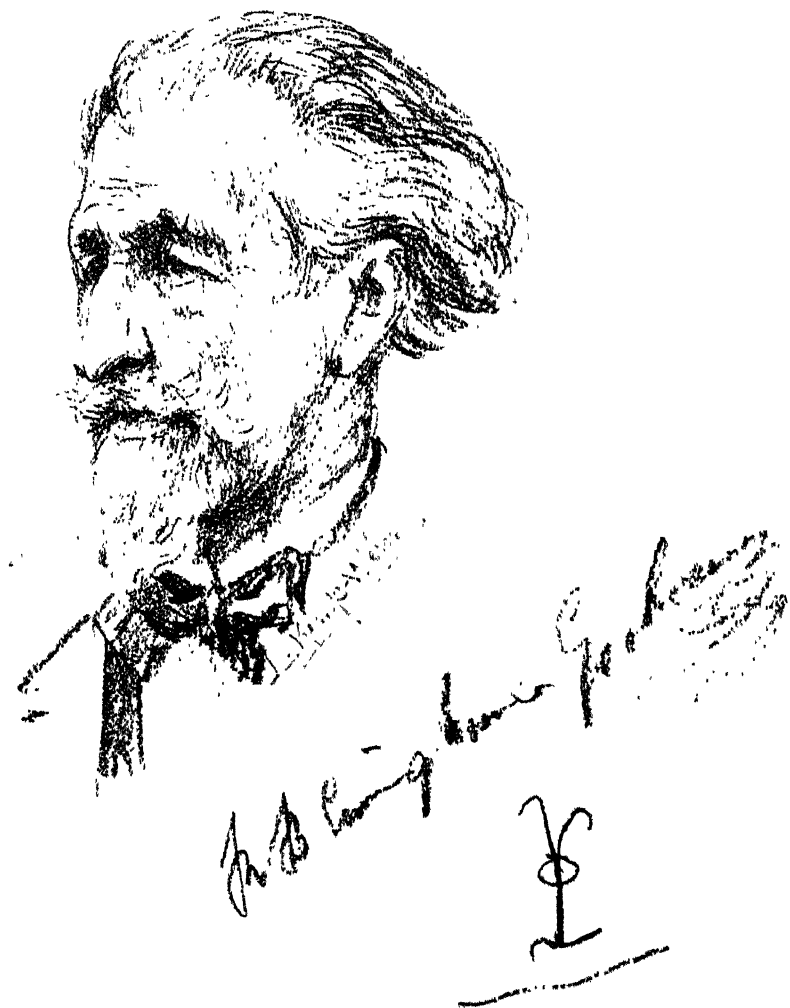
Lord Aberconway
Earl of Crawford & Balcarres
at the Royal Literary Fund Dinner, 1931.



H.R.H. The Duke of York



General Sir Percy Cox and Mrs. Alec-Tweedie.
Empire Day Dinner, 1931.



Cunninghame Grahame. Fifteen minutes' sketch by Lucy Kemp-Welch, 1931.

of the most picturesque and anomalous figures in London. Born of ancient lineage. Aristocratic to his finger-tips and withal an avowed socialist. He gloried in being tied to the rails of the House of Commons for his socialist principles.

He and I have often laughed over our gallops round the Bay of Tangier. Our first meeting there was picturesque. I was riding with my brother (Dr. Vaughan Harley) and the great-little-scientist, Sir Robert Boyce of Tropical Disease fame, and Miss Ethel Russell-Roberts, when we spied a couple of horsemen coming towards us. One was small and shy and new at the job but already starting to be a great painter (now Sir William Rothenstein), and the other suddenly stood up on his saddle, brandished his stock-whip and galloped past us. Then, slipping back into his seat he dropped a handkerchief on the sand, galloped round, picked it up by leaning right over from the saddle and waved it into the air. It was Mr. Cunninghame-Grahame.

One of my greatest friends, if one dare say so of an elderly and royal lady, is Sunity Devée, C.I., Dowager Maharanee of Cooch Behar. Without doubt she is the most brilliantly clever of the Indian women I have met.

She was the very first Indian woman to be invited to Court by Queen Victoria, and right up to her last return to India at Christmas, 1931, she was constantly being fêted at Buckingham Palace by the third generation of our Royal family. Her two books, one of which is entitled "The Life of Princess Yastodara, Wife and Disciple of the Lord Buddha," are evidence of her profound study of religion. I went to tea to say good-bye and to congratulate her again on her book on Buddha, and just before leaving she mentioned the Crown of India decoration, when she said: "This is my proudest possession. Queen Victoria gave it to me personally when we were staying at Windsor forty years ago. Just before dinner she came to me and said:

" 'Maharanee, I want you to wear this in remembrance of me.' "

"I was quite overwhelmed. But at sixty-five I remember it as if it were yesterday. Princess Beatrice was with her and the then Prince of Wales. As she pinned it on he said, 'Don't prick Her Highness, Mother.' 'Don't be silly, Bertie. Of course I won't,' and we all laughed. Yes. I was the first Indian lady to go to Court, and be received in this way. I am very proud of it. It was an opening for Indian women, you see."

What a gracious, charming old lady. Full of interest in

life. Always swathed in spotless white as a widow. Very religious, she lived in spirit with her husband in prayer. She really might have been a nun so serious was she over her ceaseless fast days and her hours of allotted prayer. Nothing kept her from either. Sixty-five is very old for an Indian—equal to eighty in a colder clime, but she had the brain of a young woman, and a very brilliant brain at that. The Maharanee was also a perfect hostess.

One of the most remarkable occasions of this remarkable season, 1931, and a great moment in the history of Europe, was the At Home given at Chatham House, the headquarters of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, to meet Dr. Brüning, Prime Minister of Germany and Chancellor of the Reich, and Dr. Curtius, the German Foreign Minister, on Monday, June 8th, at 4.30 p.m. In the evening of the same day, a reception was given to meet the visitors at the German Embassy at Carlton House Terrace. I was also present at this Reception, an amazing party, but it was in the afternoon, in the white halls of that historic mansion in St. James's Square, that I received my most vivid impressions of the seriousness of the crisis with which Germany was faced, and which had brought these two great German Ministers on a flying visit to England in order to seek help and redress of the bankruptcy that threatened them from the hands of their former adversaries.

Dr. Brüning is known in Germany as the Prime Minister with one suit. He entered the Wilhelmstrasse with a carpet bag as he is a devout Catholic who believes in self-denial and in the mortification of the flesh. They spoke of him here as an ascetic—but to me he seemed a big, full-blooded man, a very manly-looking man in fact. A warm colour, and bright eyes shining through his spectacles. In Germany he had proved a tower of strength during the dark days of the Spring of 1931. After holding the reins of power for fifteen months of continual crisis, and carrying out tax measures which, as a writer in the *Evening Standard* said, "would have sapped the strength of a Mussolini," his reputation at the time of his visit to England stood higher than that of any post-war German statesman, with the single exception of Stresemann.

By a happy circumstance I had quite a nice little chat with Dr. Brüning. In my very best German I remarked to him how much England and Germany were connected. "For instance, in my own little way," I said, "that great chemist, Baron Eustace von Liebig, was my godfather. So you see an

English woman is associated with the streets bearing the name of Liebig all over Germany." "Splendid," he said. I even had time to say that Liebig's great soup was invented to save my mother's life. "Ach, we must have a chat about that," he replied. "How interesting."

That day, at Chatham House, he got up and gave his perfectly excellent speech in the English tongue, for it turned out that he had lived many years here in Manchester as a merchant.

Soon after the return of Dr. Brüning to Berlin, the death was announced of Dr. Sthamer, the first German Ambassador in London after the War. It was very soon after his arrival in England and in reply to a letter of mine that Dr. Sthamer asked me to go and see him. He seemed a pathetic figure. He was evidently very uncertain as to how he was going to be received and overburdened by the anxiety of his post as the first German Ambassador to this country after the War. We spoke in German and became great friends from that moment and as I was leaving I said: "Remember that your country and mine have much in sympathy and must work together wholeheartedly for the success of European peace."

"Gnädige frau," he replied, courteously kissing my hand. I am here with that object, and I am glad to meet to-day somebody who feels like that."

These words evidently made an impression upon him, for at intervals when we met he used to say: "You were the first person to give me a word of encouragement when I came to your country with a heavy burden upon my shoulders."

A quiet, shy, thoughtful German gentleman, for to Sthamer the word "gentleman" might well be applied. By the bye, what a funny thing it is that there is no equivalent for "gentleman" in any language, any more than there is an equivalent for the words "flirt" or "groom"—they are three distinctly English words.

Among the brilliant parties given in the London season must be mentioned one at Londonderry House in Park Lane with its lovely chatelaine standing at the top of the stairs, and Lady Ludlow's ten o'clock receptions in Piccadilly. There, one night, I heard Chaliapin and another night Sacha Guitry and his piquante wife: Yvonne Printemps. The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland have a way of tenting in their garden and holding large and distinguished receptions therein.

After various other private functions comes my last Court at Buckingham Palace.

I had never thought to go to Court again, now that it was impossible to present a daughter-in-law or a grand-daughter. But circumstances alter plans. And so it chanced that I made my courtsey at Buckingham Palace on the evening of June 9th. The Courts have grown enormously in size. The etiquette has been simplified and the ultra-regal splendour has somewhat diminished. For this Court I had the pleasure of presenting Lady (Harry) Fox from the British Legation at Peking, and by chance I wore for the occasion a dress of yellow Imperial brocade given me by the son of the great Manchu diplomat of China, Li Hung Chang, who was the last of the representatives in London of the fallen Manchu dynasty. The yellow dress, all hand woven, was known as "Tribute silk". It was trimmed with seventeenth century *Point de Venise*, an old family treasure. For gloves—well, they were thirty-two button length at least, made long before the War, and they went to Court on this June evening of 1931 after having been cleaned for the ninth time. What stories those gloves could tell. We were in the Mall by six and the cars lined up for 6.30. We entered Buckingham Palace at 8.30, getting into the big ballroom by luck. At 9.30, the Court began.

Is there anything more beautiful than an English Court? I think not. The majesty of the whole show. The King and Queen sitting on their gorgeous velvet seats backed by all the diplomatic corps, representative Field-M Marshals and Admirals, the women with their three white plumes and white tulle veils, the men in Court uniform and diplomatic dress with all their medals and decorations, the lovely girls, all excitement and dancing eyes—but alas, to-day, with the most disgraceful carriage and awful stoops. The Queen herself, the very essence of what a queen should be—tall, fine, dignified, gracious, and her deportment might well be copied by the younger, slouching generation of debutantes.

I had told Sir Harry Fox, who had come "in attendance" on his wife, how we should meet him at a further door, after passing the Presence, and would then go to the buffet to get some of the famous Buckingham Palace Hock Cup. We had a little joke about the Hock Cup, which I explained was served from old Oriental bowls with beautiful punch ladles.

When the Court was over and we had all had our trains straightened out by gorgeous gentlemen holding mystic sticks,

and had made our two curtseys to the King and Queen after hearing our names called out in stentorian tones by the Lord Chamberlain who read them from cards, we women had moved on to the long passage to meet the husbands and await the passing of the Royal procession.

Unfortunately the passage-way was not kept as clear as in former times and so the dignity of the Royal procession was somewhat marred. Beefeaters from the Tower in their splendid red uniforms dating from the time of Henry VIII held us back, but not sufficiently. Youthful pages in scarlet with big white lace cravats attended the King and Queen, who passed down the line with the Royal Family immediately behind them, followed by the greatest ladies and gentlemen in the land, the highest diplomats and ambassadors from other countries. We women curtsied like a great sweeping wall as they passed between us and passed on to their royal supper-room. We ordinary folk made for the various buffets. Swords, helmets, and cocked hats were placed in a corner on the floor, so that the men might be free to reach the buffet and procure refreshments for their ladies from the fork supper. Everything was there that could be wanted, from pure champagne, hock, orangeade and coffee, strawberries, wonderful sandwiches and patties; but, alas, the Hock Cup was no more.

Shades of Queen Victoria; fancy the famous Hock Cup of your Majesty's day disappearing into oblivion.

Lord Chelmsford told an amusing story relating to Kipling's *Kim* at the Fifth Annual Luncheon of the Kipling Society held at the Hotel Rembrandt on June 10th at which he was the chief guest.

A lady, he said, was obtaining a book at a well-known library and remarked that she did not want any of Kipling's writings because he made animals speak. The attendant offered her "*Kim*" then newly published, with the assurance that there was something different from the "*Just So Stories*". The lady opened the book and exclaimed: "I am not going to take it on trust. Why, here's a lama speaking in the very first chapter."

Lord Chelmsford remarked that Rudyard Kipling was a writer who should be approached chronologically and he traced Mr. Kipling's growth from the jubilee celebrations of '87 and '97 and our growth as an Imperial people. Kipling interpreted us to ourselves, and fostered the Imperial spirit.

Major-General L. C. Dunsterville, the original of "Stalky", was in the Chair, and Sir Francis Goodenough and Lieut.-General Sir George MacMunn each made good speeches. Among other friends of mine present at this luncheon was Mr. S. A. Courtauld, whose son, Mr. Augustine Courtauld, had been marooned away in the far Arctic by his own request for five months, three weeks of which were in total darkness. "What did you do?" I asked. "I recited poetry, tried to remember prose and made out luscious menus for the future. When I got home I forgot all about them."

By kind invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Henry Simpson, banker and poet, and President of the Poets Club, I was present on June 16th at a dinner held at the Criterion Restaurant when Lady Keeble (Miss Lillah McCarthy) described a scheme for a National Poets Library and Recital Hall. I sat on the Chairman's left and Lillah McCarthy on his right. This great actress, whose acting with Matheson Lang in *The Wandering Jew* some ten years ago at the New Theatre in St. Martin's Lane was one of the memorable performances of the year, looked tall and stalk-like in white satin with her black hair framing her "classical" features. She appeared magnificent as she recited extracts from the works of Hardy, Masfield and Conrad and pleaded for a house for poetry readings.

Captain Gilbert Frankau was scornful of the idea and said that the Poetry Bookshop was quite good enough for the purpose.

* * * * *

Another day in June came this nice letter from a woman friend, so perhaps I'm still some good :

"My dear Mrs. Alec-Tweedie. I called on you a few days ago—just to try and see you again. Now I want to send you just a line. You have always been so particularly nice to me. I have thoroughly appreciated your atmosphere. I want you to feel how much my knowing you means to me. Your own self, and your parties—you have given me many pleasures, and I thank God that He let my paths cross yours. I am sending you some Cinghalese wedding-gift hair-pins. I know of nobody I would like better than you to have them. I want to give away my little things, while I am still here. If you will accept them, I shall be happy."

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It was very nice to be asked to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party for the fifth year in succession. It is always a delightful reunion, but was quite memorable in 1931, as it was held on the only real day of summer. There are usually from four to five thousand people at these gatherings. The grounds are so large they might easily accommodate 10,000, and the lake surrounded by Iris, by tennis courts, the terraces and the immense Refreshment Tents would hardly be overcrowded even then.

By the time all the members of the New House of Commons and their wives and daughters, all the members of the Diplomatic Corps, the heads of the Army and Navy and Air Force, Judges, Presidents and other officials have assembled, the Palace grounds present an animated sight.

At 4 o'clock exactly the King and Queen walk out from the north door where their private apartments are, when the members of the Cabinet and other officials are officially introduced. By the time they reach the front steps, they divide, one goes to the right and the other to the left, their equerries making a passage-way for them. The sons and daughters follow in their wake and other members of the Royal Family, but in 1929 when the King was ill there was only the Queen; the Prince of Wales walked behind his Royal Mother, who as usual was most gracious and, as King Amanullah thought, "the most wonderful person in England was the Queen."

It is a slow walk, because certain prominent figures have to be introduced by the Lords in waiting and the King and Queen are particularly clever at recognizing their friends and stopping to shake hands and say a word or two. The Queen always carries a tightly rolled umbrella—something to put her hand on, I fancy—and at garden-parties they always match exactly the colour of her dress.

All this takes a long time. At the end Their Majesties meet again at the Durbar tent, near the lake, where certain important people join them by invitation for tea. There are so few flowers in the grounds of Buckingham Palace but wonderful grass.

The Sultan of Muscat was also in England about that time. We had stayed on the same occasion in a wonderful Indian Palace a few years before, so I knew His Highness when we met again lunching with Sir Percy and Lady Cox.

When I asked him what had impressed him most in England, he replied :

"The sub-mar-ine. I go down Ports-mouth and come up at South-ampton."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, the great Queen of England. She is beau-ti-ful."

These two native comments on the Great White Queen are interesting. If the white races are losing ground as some people fear, the black and yellow and brown races must take their place. Somebody has to rule.

Japan is rising to place and power in the Pacific. Will the Abyssinians rise to power in Africa or the Senegalese or Egyptians or Sudanese or who? They all have a long way to travel yet. Talking of the Abyssinians, who prefer to be called Ethiopians to-day, they have just had a great coronation of their King, whose heir, two brothers and sister came to London on an official visit in January, 1932.

I met them at a special tea-party given in their honour. The little lady had all the dignity of three thousand years of direct ancestry from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. She was quite fair, quite nice-looking in rather an Egyptian straight-nosed type. Small, stately and dressed all in white. A skirt, a large cloak, tightly buttoned up at the throat like a military cape, and a white cloth toque. The Princes were very dark by way of contrast, their clothes were the same as hers but all black, and the collars were also of velvet. Never before have I seen natives of any land devoid of jewels or rich embroidery at any official function. They spoke no foreign language, but their Foreign Minister conversed in excellent French, and I was at a little tea-table with the two young men and the Minister and plied them with many creamy cakes. The more creamy, the better they liked them, and they smiled and bowed as they accepted one after another. One could not help contrasting their European surroundings with their own homes. I have been very near their Abyssinian homes in Sudan, with the sand and the real native warriors with spears, and no clothing, living in Tukles or huts of reed and straw. A wild and primitive life.

The nineteen Abyssinians of this party brought their straw mattresses with them and preferred them spread on the floor at their hotel to European beds. Which makes me think of much cramp experienced sitting on the floor myself for meals in Morocco, Syria, Sudan, Egypt, India, Java, Malay, Ceylon, China and Japan. The floor gives Europeans cramp, and a bed or a chair returns the compliment to the native who suffers

from pins and needles when his legs hang down. Hence, in a railway carriage they prefer to sit cross-legged.

What a contrast. Ethiopia and England.

Their native markets and camels and donkeys and big game not far off, and how different the life; but they said, "they knew all about London and it was just what they expected."

What will be the result on these four people (for the Crown Prince was lunching at Sandringham with the King that day) when they return to their native land? The serious little lady is nineteen, with four children who she left behind with her husband; the Crown Prince is seventeen, so they all appear very young; but one must remember the Eastern is far older than the Western, so we must add on ten years to each.

Lady Simon, the wife of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, had a pretty little way of pleasing them all that day by Irish signs and smiles.

The Times said:

TEA PARTY

LADY SIMON

Princess Tanagne Work of Ethiopia honoured Lady Simon with her presence at tea yesterday afternoon at Claridge's. In addition to Miss Hall, Lady-in-Waiting, and members of the Suite of the Crown Prince of Ethiopia, the following were invited:—

Lord and Lady Edward Gleichen, Lord and Lady Noel-Buxton, Sir Rennell and Lady Rodd, the Hon. Sybil Borthwick, General Sir Reginald and Lady Wingate, Lady Robertson, Lady Vansittart, Lady Hall, Lady Montgomery, Mrs. Anthony Eden, Mrs. de Bunsen, Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, Dr. R. E. Drake-Brockman, Canon J. A. Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. Gaselee, and Mrs. Maurice Peterson.

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Japan is going ahead by leaps and bounds in the Far East. So all I shall say in this volume is that in 1926 when "An Adventurous Journey" was first published, I prophesied a great war on the Pacific in about five years and ended

"JAPAN WILL WIN",

and when I brought that book up-to-date in 1929 in a three-and-sixpenny edition, I repeated the prophecy amidst laughter from outside; but I have more to say—so much, in fact, that it may wait for another volume. The war came in exactly five years. The date of its end is not yet.

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On Thursday, July 2nd, I was one of a thousand people present at the Twenty-First Birthday Banquet of the Overseas League at the Albert Hall. The principal guest was The Prince

of Wales, and Mr. (now Sir) John Evelyn Wrench, founder of the League and the present editor of the *Spectator*, was in the chair. The Albert Hall transformed. Verily, it was transformed and charmingly done too. Nearly a thousand of us dined in comfort on hot food at a guinea a head.

I was in a box on the grand tier, No. 34 to be exact. Usually that box holds ten. For the dinner it only held four. On entering one tumbled down the steps and saw the backs of four chairs with a neatly laid table in front of them. The table was made by a carpenter evidently. About two feet wide, placed right up to the edge, its white cloth fell over the front of the box, and as others did likewise, the effect of the Hall was white. Here and there Union Jacks and Empire Flags and scarlet flowers and blue drapings gave the excellent idea of red, white and blue.

From my box seat I looked down on the Prince. Again he ate very little dinner, and busily asked his neighbour for facts and figures which he jotted down on large half-sheets of paper. Each one evidently had its headline, on which he glanced when speaking, although he hardly appeared to do so, as he prattled merrily on. He is a good speaker, generally the best at the table. So small, so fragile and boyish-looking at thirty-six, and yet such a dare-devil—the Prince of Wales is a bundle of wisdom and magnetic force. He works and plays for eighteen and twenty hours of the twenty-four. No one can keep pace with his energy. He hunts, plays polo, motors anything anywhere, pilots his own aeroplane and speed boat, and yet looks more of the boy with his auburn hair, than the tireless sportsman. He hasn't the same love of shooting and racing as the King. In fact, having stalked big game for his rifle, he now prefers shooting them with his camera. Alas, he has not inherited the beautiful bell-like voice of Queen Victoria, or the deep tones of his father (though he has luckily dispensed with the rolling "r's" of King Edward).

The King, that good kindly gentleman with a deep rich voice and the large amount of common sense and vision, is the better speaker, but there is certainly something magnetic in the Prince's voice. No man ever performed public duties for his country more ceaselessly or more assiduously. No man ever earned his wages at such physical and mental cost. The Prince said that whenever possible he tried to shake hands with every Britisher he encountered overseas. He con-

gratulated the League and the management of the Albert Hall on the attractive way in which they had organized the gathering. "I have been in this historic hall," he said, "on a great many diverse occasions. I have been at demonstrations. I have heard Caruso, Melba, and other great singers, and it was also in this historic hall that I saw Carpentier knock out Beckett. But I must say that I have never seen the Albert Hall looking better than it is to-night."

Mr. J. H. Thomas caused a great laugh by remarking that an urgent message had just been delivered to him from the House of Commons to say that there had been a division but that the Government was "quite safe". He could not anticipate that only three months were to pass before the Government fell, and that an election would be fought in which the Labour Party was to suffer the most severe reverse in its existence.

When possible the Prince speaks extemporarily and abhors the microphone. But there are occasions when one word out of place might do infinite harm, and one word in place has broad effect. Hence his important broadcast speeches on his return from South America in 1931 were typed out clearly. He wrote them himself with the greatest care. Facts were produced by important business men—he consulted not one but many. These facts were discussed and re-discussed and finally the Prince put them into his own words. A man who had advised him said to me, "I never saw anyone so painstaking. A great speech he made at the Guildhall he went over and over again. He sent for fresh dates and figures. Finally I sat near him and noticed he never touched any food till we came to the chicken. He was reading and re-reading his speech and pencilling the words he wished to dwell upon. He was worried and anxious and terribly desirous that what he said should be of value. I never knew anyone work so hard or be so conscientious as the Prince."

And in one day this indefatigable Prince of ours travelled by air, and motor, or walked three hundred and fifty miles in Cornwall to fulfil his public duties.

What a contrast to the great dinner at Albert Hall of nearly a thousand people a week or two before, was the Anti-war demonstration. At the Overseas Dinner the Albert Hall was all white with hanging table-cloths and brilliantly lighted boxes. On July 11th it was packed from floor to ceiling in the afternoon, and hanging with flags of all the countries belonging to the League of Nations. The Stars and Stripes were not there,

neither was Russia, but sixty other countries were represented.

It was quite interesting to note the differences of the three Prime Ministers. Ramsay Macdonald came first. With his grey hair and smart grey suit and thin aristocratic poet-like face he looked an interesting personality. He was most dramatic, quite the tub-thumping orator, raised his hand to heaven, shook his fist, then made a long pause, and was an actor of the first order.

Then came Mr. Baldwin, who had been sitting immediately behind him. This Prime Minister looked extraordinarily pale and like his cartoons with his small eyes and big nose and streaks of auburn hair. Dressed in an old black coat, he chaffed the present Prime Minister over being a Celt and regretted he himself had none of the fire of that race as he was an Englishman. To emphasize this he appeared to be particularly calm and clear-headed.

Then rose Lloyd George, who looked exactly like a seal. His hair was no longer wavy and pretty but white and streaky right down over his ears like a badly shingled girl's. He was tremendously sun-burnt and his mouth and moustache seemed more awry than ever and his moustache very white, a distinct contrast to Sir William Robertson's shaggy black eyebrows, almost as shaggy and black as Sir Arthur Pinero's.

The Field-Marshal spoke with his hands behind his back in quite a calm, clear and crisp manner. Not a word too much but thoroughly businesslike.

Lloyd George was extraordinarily quiet for Lloyd George. Perhaps it was after Baldwin's sly dig at the Celts that he felt restrained. Anyway, he was at his best and did not seem nearly as hot and weary as everyone else on that platform who was suffering from the most enormous arc lamps being thrown upon them from each side of the hall, and literally had to hold their programmes over their eyes in self-defence from the glare. We had a little excitement over some wretched woman who crept in and sat herself down at the Press table immediately under the speakers, and as they walked on to the stage she threw a stink bomb at Macdonald's feet. She was luckily quietly seized upon and marched out as she had other of these delectable missiles with her which she had not time to throw.

It was rather interesting to note that not one of those four speakers was reading from endless pages of manuscript. A tiny sheet of paper about the size of an envelope with a few

headings sufficed for Baldwin who wrote his notes while sitting on the platform. Macdonald and Lloyd George brought theirs with them. All these speeches were broadcast to sixty different centres, including America, and they were also broadcast in Hyde Park through loud speakers where some twenty-five thousand people had collected as a gesture against war.

Exactly eight years before, namely in September, 1923, I had sat in the Central Park, New York, a few days after the earthquake in Japan when I was held up in America, and listened to Lloyd George holding forth in the Metropolitan Opera House. That was the first time a speech had been broadcast to an overflow audience, and such a novelty was it that I refused an invitation to a box and walked about amongst the people in Central Park to hear this strange event. I even got a sketch of it.

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What an extraordinary people we are. We always rise to the occasion and surpass ourselves in some miraculous way. It's an expensive way to secure inimitable results. Take August and September, 1931, after two years of socialism. We were down and out. Our exports were down, our pound was out at 14s. with worse to come. Our unemployed were over three million. We woke up. We had a general election, put politics aside; returned a National Government. In a few weeks we had got rid of a hundred and fifty thousand unemployed, had opened factories and set blast furnaces going. Had already put on tariffs, with more to follow. Had had very great help from Mr. Bennett of Canada, with his magnificent driving power, and the prospect of a really effective Empire Conference in a few months' time which the Socialists had killed, as they did my Pageant, a year before. They had tried to kill the Empire just as William II of Prussia tried to kill Europe. Both nearly succeeded.

Mr. Bennett went home assured that the Imperial Conference in Ottawa would not repeat the fiasco of London in 1930. He is a great Dominion statesman, a real live wire. The oldest dominion had returned to the Mother Land to give her a lead. Well done Canada and her ten million souls.

The finest speech at the Guildhall Banquet was made by Mr. Bennett.

There were great receptions at Lancaster House in St. James's Park, the late home of the Dukes of Sutherland and of that lovely woman, Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, one of the

great hostesses of London. But she no longer stood half-way up the divided marble stairs looking a dream of beauty. Ramsay Macdonald and his daughter received us in a side passage instead. Stafford House as it used to be called is no longer ideal for receptions. It is now full of show cases, fuller still of the history of London. Quite a sight, in fact ; but the home atmosphere has gone and the open space is limited.

Then there was a wonderful party at Canada House in Trafalgar Square which was once the Union Club, a fine building for entertaining, given by the Hon. G. H. Ferguson, the Commissioner of Canada. Some rich Indian ought to come along and present a really fine place to supplement the present India House. It has one delightful point and that is the carved stone balustrade of that beautiful Indian carving I so much admired *en masse* at Gwalior when I stayed with that wonderful Indian Rajah Scindia—and this carved stonework is very beautiful.

Then there were tea parties at Mr. Laurence Binyon's, at the eastern end of the British Museum. And the Royal Academy *soirée*. The many parties given by the National Art Collectors' Fund for the Persian Exhibition, and the parties given by the Persian Minister for that Exhibition.

And as the season spun on, a female dress reformation took place—Eton crops disappeared, shingled hair grew long and began to force itself into a little bun. Dresses dropped from above the knees, four, five and six inches, and by the end of the season the evening dresses touched the ground, so quick was their transformation. Instead of three and a half yards of stuff, six and more were required. Loops and folds and puffs had come.

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Diplomatic dinner followed diplomatic dinner during the season. All interesting and many delightful. Here one got a chance of speaking foreign languages and chatting over world politics. Some of the outstanding diplomatic parties I enjoyed of the 1931 season were given by Japan, Italy, Germany, Argentine, Norway, Persia, Siam, Estonia, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Latvia, and Czechoslovakia.

It is impossible to mention all the private entertaining, lunches, teas, dinners, of happy moments and pleasant recollections, entered in my engagement book for one season. These are some in the order in which they came :

H.H. The Dowager Maharanee of Cooch Behar, Miss

Emily Paterson, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Courtauld, Mr. and Mrs. John Walter of *The Times*, General Sir Wyndham and Lady Childs, Mrs. Carruthers (Lady Markham), Dowager Lady Swaythling, Sir John and Lady Simon, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Macmillan, W. W. Grantham, K.C., Lady Clare Smyth-Pigott, Sir Percy and Lady Cunynghame, General and Mrs. Warner, Colonel Sir Arthur and Lady Dick, Sir Henry Imbert-Terry, Miss Grainger Kerr, Sir Albion Banerji, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Runciman, General Sir Herbert and Lady Cooke, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Binyon, Mrs. Beecham Tufnell, Lord and Lady Brentford, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Bevan, Lord and Lady Dunedin, Colonel and Mrs. Eyre Powell, Mrs. Robert Yerburch, Colonel Sir Arthur and Lady Welby, Mr. and Mrs. Hagberg Wright, Sir Phene and Lady Neale, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Sir Henry Sharpe, Mrs. Arthur Macdonald, Lady Bircham, Lord and Lady Hailsham, Sir Maurice and Lady de Bunsen, Lord and Lady Dawson of Penn, Sir Murdoch MacDonald, General Sir Percy and Lady Cox, Lady Vaughan Morgan, Lady Critchett and Mrs. Upjohn, Sir Evelyn and Lady Cecil, Minister and Mrs. Stancioff, Dame Clarissa Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rennie, Sir William and Lady Waterlow, Mrs. Frank Gleadow, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Nicholson, Mrs. B. J. Clergue, Sir St. Clair Thomson, Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond, Dr. and Mrs. F. W. Goodbody, Sir Trevor and Lady Dawson (famous for their wonderful garden-parties), and Sir Beechcroft Towse, the blind V.C.

A blind man plays golf by sound. It sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But it is true.

Sir Beechcroft Towse had played golf at St. Andrews as a youth and he continued (on a small course) when he was blind.

Someone has to go to the hole and beat the flag on the tin. He hears the sound. "How many feet?" he asks. Two, or twenty is the reply and he hits accordingly and plays quite a good game. But is there anything my old friend "Beech" does not do, from being the head of the National Institute for the Blind to building a hen-house? He won a V.C. on the battle-field. He has morally won two V.Cs for his courage and example since then.

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CHAPTER XVI

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FAR EAST

Yellow Peril—Englishmen abroad—Missionaries—Commercial Men, Officials—International Politics—The Unassimilable Races—Oriental dislike of foreigners—Race Hatred—Japan and China—Progress in Japan—Shintoism—Western Civilization in the Far East—Aloofness of English people—Education in Japan and China—The late Emperor—Manchuria—A packed suit-case—The women of Japan—Prime Minister's Dinner at Tokyo—The Eurasian—Japan, the Great Britain of the East—Westernization.

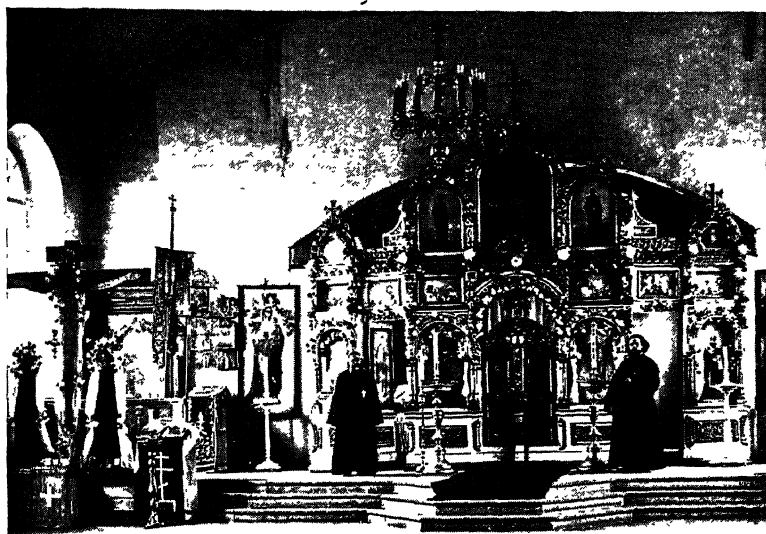
WHEN Lord Charles Beresford wrote his book "The Yellow Peril", he was rather in advance of his time. Albeit he wrote with a very foreseeing eye. The Far East at that time was in the very early stages of waking up. There were very few of the signs and portents to which the twentieth century (or *our* era) has given birth. One cannot now speak of the "Unchanging East", for the West has penetrated far and wide over the Orient, and the pity of it is that so much of our civilization, as introduced, has been grossly materialistic, almost entirely devoid of that Sweetness and Light, for which Matthew Arnold never ceased to sigh. And the Pacific is aflame.

The Foreigners whom I met in my Eastern travels were invariably hospitable and courteous to me. I owe them most grateful thanks for all the time they spent in helping me to see things and for the many pleasurable discussions I had with them as to the significance of all I saw and heard.

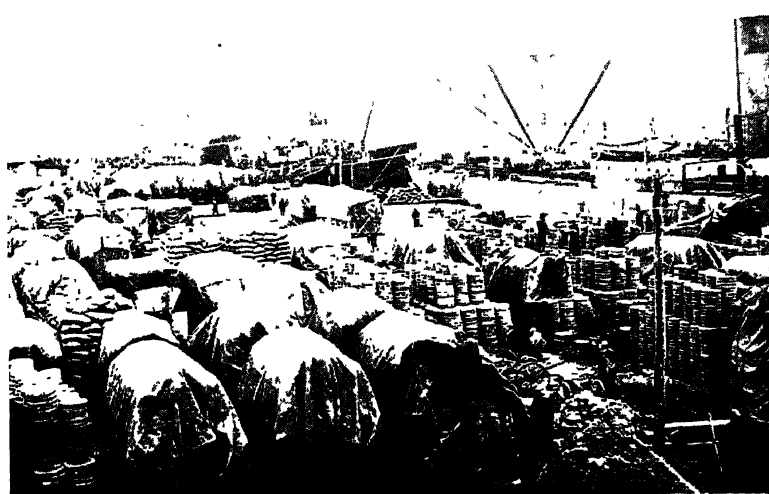
They might be divided into three categories :

Missionaries.—These well-intentioned persons have done their best ; but how few there are, if any, who arrive in China or Japan, with the least idea of the age-old and well-tried religious and moral systems — Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism and Confucianism. Under these the Oriental in his millions has lived peaceably and contentedly so far as his religious needs were concerned, without any of the fierce animosities that are stirred up by the sectarian wars and contentious beliefs that have characterized and marred our Christian system.

Commercial Men.—Their forceful methods of trade (usually gained by Treaty rights, at the point of the sword) backed up



On the outskirts of Russia. An old (Greek) Church, Manchuria, Mongolia. In Siberia and Russia the crosses have been removed from many churches, and they are now used as Soviet Clubs.



Mongolian Beans for "Cake" ready to be shipped from Dairen, South Manchuria. A colossal trade.



The top tower of the Great Wall beyond Nancou, North China, September 2nd, 1925. From left: Monsieur Brossel, the Author sitting without her hat, Mr. Agnew, Mrs. Agnew of California, W. W. Grantham, K.C.



One of the Staff Officers of the "Christian" General Feng, *inside* the Imperial Palace, after the young Emperor had been sent away.



The Author sketching at the bronze incense burner, Lhama Temple, Peking.



The Manchu Emperor of China in Exile at Tientsin, July, 1925. He had left Peking eight months before. Kidnapped when living as a private gentleman in Tientsin, December, 1931, and carried off to be possible Emperor of Manchuria. 1932.



The Manchu Empress of China in exile, Tientsin, July, 1925.
Now known as Mrs. Elizabeth Pu.

by labour-saving machinery and the creation of multitudinous hitherto unfelt wants have made life more expensive for Eastern peoples. The wealth gained, even the princely fortunes by so many bankers, brokers and traders, has opened natives' eyes to the fact that they must also be up and doing for themselves in order not to get left behind in the struggle for gain.

Except in the remote interior, life in the ports and large towns of China and Japan is now as hustling and competitive as it is in any progressive city in Europe or the United States. The process has been one of Westernization by the introduction of a materialistic civilization.

Diplomatists and Consuls.—I have invariably been struck with the hard-working type of official who manages our interests abroad. Our Civil Service with its comparatively poor remuneration is fortunate in being staffed by men who look after British interests in a whole-hearted way and bring to it the precepts of their public school and university life by which they maintain the traditions that have been handed down to them by a long line of predecessors who have given their best, often at the cost of their lives, to the service.

But these representatives, of whatever nation, are only the exponents of the policies formulated at home by their respective Governments. As far as China is concerned, a very great deal of unsettlement has been caused by the jealousies of the powers with their treaties and demands. Most Favoured Nation clauses, their domiciliary Concessions and their displays of Force, no doubt necessary from time to time, I grant you, but none the less galling and disliked by people who want to be left alone, or who at least think they do.

I have on various occasions met Chinese gentlemen, affable, friendly and intellectual who are full of good feelings towards us but in every one of them there is, deep down, a constant feeling of resentment against the special rights and privileges (all of which have been won by warlike operations) of some Foreign Powers in China.

But all this by the way. Our trade has steadily grown and the East and West have become interdependent to an amazing extent. There is no going backward and our policy therefore has to be framed so that the huge volumes of trade and intercourse can be regulated for the mutual benefit of the Nations involved. No easy matter—judging from all that I have seen. Misunderstandings and national susceptibilities are ever-present

rocks in the Channel, no doubt because our mentality, our principles and procedure differ so widely from theirs. During my travels in China and Japan I often found myself profoundly impressed with the character and range of the native intelligence, and it was not long before it was still further impressed on me that there were problems and questions which were regarded from entirely different points of view.

The interest taken in International politics by these people, not only men, but women too, is remarkable. Every one of them will be found after a few minutes' conversation to be ready to cite instances of injustices forced upon them in their own countries and they resent the lack of reciprocity in the treatment of their fellow-nationals abroad, especially in America. We in Great Britain are not free of this reproach either, though our exclusion laws are by no means so stringent.

At once the thought would rise in my mind: "Yes. But you Orientals belong to the unassimilable races"—people who will not throw in their lot with the country of their adoption, who remit all their savings home, who herd together in exclusive little communities. Dislike of foreigners is, alas, too widespread among Orientals, but here is a curious feature which I observed and which I have since corroborated by the opinions of various friends who know the East. I found that, in Japan, collectively foreigners are regarded with favour, but individually the average Japanese does not like us. In China it is just the reverse; the average Chinese individual is friendly, while in the mob mass they hurl insults at us and would willingly rend us to pieces.

Race distrust is terrible. I had no idea such racial animosities existed till I went from Italy by Greece, Silicia, Syria and Palestine to Egypt. Every nation that came across my path, poured out words of distrust and often of positive hatred of the other. Armenian Christian refugees, Russians of the orthodox Greek Church, German and Austrian merchants, Czecho-Slavo, French soldiers, Greek bankers, Syrian Mohammedans all hating one another. In India, the Mohammedans and Hindus are only friends when they combine in a common cause against the white man, and this also applies to Northern and Southern Chinese. In Palestine Mohammedans and Jews are constantly at one another's throats, while in Syria there is pronounced hatred against the Roman Catholics under whom they sit. A devout Moslem hates everyone who is not a Mussulman.

What are we going to do about it all? My answer is, leave them alone as much as possible and let them work out their own salvation.

Japan and China are never likely to come very closely together. Japan is too go-ahead, too determined to get on and to benefit by all she can learn elsewhere and make use of it at home. She learnt to make battleships on the Tyne and now builds her own. She has learnt to make aeroplanes. Japan is simply forging ahead. She has even gone to the length of having an Unemployment problem and difficulties in procuring domestic servants. She learnt Medicine in Europe and now teaches her own students. Her medical profession has come to the front especially in Research. Look for instance at the great Kitasato who discovered the Plague bacillus, or at Takamine whose diastase ferment has been a boon to sufferers from indigestion the world over, or at Hata whose name is hyphenated with that of the German Scientist Ehrlich in the discovery of Salvarsan, which revolutionized the treatment of Syphilis for the benefit of the human race, and there are many more.

I have often heard it said that Japan is unoriginal, that she is a copyist, an imitator. That may be true, but only to a certain extent. In science and industry there have been many important discoveries and inventions by Japanese in lines as widely separated as medicine and auto tyres.

In other fields than that of industry—namely those of Arts and Crafts—Japan's contributions have been notable. Her colour prints which reached their best expression nearly a century ago, have influenced the great artists of Europe in their treatment of line and colour.

Her porcelains, cloisonnés, bronzes, enamels, damascens, silks and other products, are so intensely individual that they are in a class by themselves. Lacquer work in Japan was an important industry in the seventeenth century and reached a perfection then which has in no other country been obtained. Her present methods of silk production are entirely original and are far in advance of those in any other country.

Even her Shintoism, as observed in the numerous Shinto temples, originated in Japan before Buddhism was introduced from Korea. Shintoism is a simple form of nature-worship and has elements of ancestor worship. It has twelve sects but all are harmonious.

In many ways I found Japan and China at the cross-roads,

the East meeting West and the West meeting the East, but mainly as regards the material aspects of our civilization.

Look at the houses of the rich—half European and half native. The family generally lives in the native part but the big reception rooms are in European style and here the Lord and Master entertains not only his foreign friends, but usually his own nationals also. They are learning to like sofas and padded armchairs, to find them softer and more restful and relaxing than straw mats. Often they prefer a four or five course dinner served and cleared course by course, by a couple of servants, to fifty courses all jumbled down together, a general jamboree of a hundred small plates and dishes on one table and with a servant attending each person.

Then again the vogue for Foreign style clothes is spreading. They seem to find them more practicable (more inexpensive too) than the picturesque silk gowns and kimonos with wide flowing sleeves which get in the way of both food and business. The "pot" hat has become very popular in Japan; someone once told me that its introduction had supplied a long felt "want". The ladies also, alas, find their flowing robes in the way for practical movement, and as a dear little Japanese soul remarked, "Oh dear, me obi (sash) is so hot." Everywhere in Japan one meets schoolgirls and young women University students; they all wear a queer pleated skirt over their kimonos, a fashion which China has copied.

The Japanese are more difficult people to understand when they talk English than are the Chinese. The latter, like Germans and Russians, often speak faultlessly and vary only a word in five minutes in a fashion to give away their own nationality. Tens of thousands of people talk our ugly simple language extremely well; but somehow the Japanese pronounce it so strangely, and the more glibly it is delivered the more strangely it sounds. I once listened to a very eloquent and exalted Japanese discourse in English for half an hour and I don't believe any one of the 300 people in the room understood one word. The British certainly did not and now the Japanese themselves say they did not. The speaker knew our language well, wrote it faultlessly and is a scholar.

In China, among those who don't speak English our language has been likened to the twittering of birds; that's the way it strikes their ears.

So many of our people live for years in India, Egypt, China

or Japan and know no more of the native people when they leave them than they did on arrival. They do their business and do it well. They find their recreation at the Club, Bridge, Mah Jongg, Tennis, Polo, Racing or Dancing. They do all that is required of them but they find no pleasure apparently in studying the people, the habits or customs of the land in which they find themselves. They do not cultivate social relations as a rule, though in the rare instances when they do so, the Oriental is usually found receptive and hospitable.

Our officials and missionaries learn the language but in the Far East commercial affairs are not done direct, they are made subject to the Compradore who is a go-between. In Shanghai I have met men who have been for twenty or more years doing business in China, and making their fortune out of it, and yet who know not a word of the language or have ever spoken to Chinese except to their Compradore and their own domestic servants. This remark includes such men as the heads of big Banking Corporations and Commercial Houses, and when we come to think of it, is there not here some ground for consideration as to whether the Chinese and Japanese may not regard the question of unassimilable race as being also applicable to the strangers within their gates.

Mais, oui, there are always two sides to every question.

Human interest, understanding, and sympathy do such a lot to bind nations together. Why don't our folks abroad do more in this line?

Both Japan and China are making a great business of Education. In the latter, however, the lack of good governance has allowed indiscipline to get the upper hand. The Chinese have excellent regulations, but schools have been starved for want of public funds and in the colleges students have become worked up as to public wrongs and political outbreaks and strikes have occupied their minds to the extent that most of the Chinese Universities are now in a chronic state of uproar.

Never shall I forget the long procession of boys and girls during the summer of 1925 in Peking with all their political banners and loud frenzied yells. Poor fools—as if that would right any wrongs their country may have had. This was the time I sat with my suit-case packed for many weeks, waiting an order to leave, and with my heavy luggage ungetatable in a warehouse in Shanghai. China was ablaze. That was civil war.

In Japan, of course, a much smaller country, education is

compulsory. They have a complete system of elementary middle and secondary schools, as well as technical schools and colleges. There are about a couple of hundred high schools for girls, with women teachers.

I have no doubt that it is the countries where the women are the most highly educated that are the most successful. Roughly speaking the British and American races come first, followed by Scandinavia, France and Belgium. I cannot help feeling that German mentality during the War missed the help and influence of the women behind, for they have not *en masse* been really well educated on any other line of wider importance than how to become a good *Hausfrau*.

The countries that lag are those where women are not yet awake and their influence is not felt, to wit, Turkey, India, China and Egypt.

It was the women of Japan who organized those wonderful crèches and food centres for mothers and children, that I saw in the open streets of Tokyo, a few weeks after the earthquake of September, 1923. When I asked Mrs. Okabe, daughter of the Viscount Kato, who had so long been Ambassador in London, herself a Girton College girl, how they did it, she said in her pretty little way, "We Japanese ladies just copied what the English ladies had done in the Great War." Not only are these girls being educated, there is a great impetus to show them how to earn their own livings and wean them away from that total dependence on man, still prevalent.

Japanese women, like their European sisters, often find they must support themselves in the hurly-burly of an over-populated world. Either a woman must be provided for by the father who produced her, or he must educate her as he does his boy, to stand alone, and to do her share of the world's work. Japan has realized this and is educating her women gradually to take their place beside her men.

I was greatly struck, at the Prime Minister's dinner party in Tokyo, with three really beautiful young Japanese women, all speaking perfect English and all of them married to men of good diplomatic position. They were Mesdames Okabe, Okomoto and Kishi, a trio of beauty and brains. It is from women of that class and type that less fortunate sisters take their cue and the whole movement is becoming astonishingly widespread.

When I visited places such as Dairen in Manchuria, I could not help remarking that although Chinese and Japanese of the

labouring classes lived in close proximity in the crowded poorer quarters there seemed little evidence of race mixture, and I found on further inquiry that this does not present any problem. Inter-marriage and promiscuous intercourse between the people of Japan and China may be said to be practically non-existent. Perhaps this has led to the great Pacific War of 1931-32, which I saw rumbling five years before.

And I am glad to think it is so, for to me, race mixture such as we see it in the Eurasian is the outcome of crime.

That is a hard thing to say, but not one whit more hard than the life of the Eurasian in any clime. That the white, black, brown and yellow races were never meant to marry is shown by nature's products. The children generally lack the best on either side and from a medical point of view their body resistance to germ disease is low enough to produce a high death rate. Tuberculosis (consumption) is a common disease among those of mixed blood. Nature rebels.

Strong fine healthy humanity is seldom produced by mixed marriage. That any white woman dare risk an Eurasian child or that any white woman can cohabit with a coloured man is one of the saddest of anomalies. In the first place the children are born in no-man's land, so to speak, and go through life with a curse round their necks; and in the second place, the woman walks blindfold into her own shroud. She is despised by both families and soon comes to feel an outcast.

And yet each hemisphere produces splendid men and women, of stature and brain suitable to that hemisphere and the product of its heredity and environment. Each must remain true to its own sphere and remember the misery of the nondescript Eurasian, and half-caste shackled through life, is the product.

Japan is very wide-awake. She is instituting Eugenic Societies and Birth Control propaganda and doing her best to enlighten her young, as all young should be enlightened from their earliest years as to the mysteries of life and their easy abuse.

As is the case with us in England, Japan's population has outgrown the country's capacity and she is driven to pay increasing attention to colonial expansion. There are large tracts of land not far distant which can yet absorb a good annual quatum of Japanese. I refer to Manchuria and Korea, the Liao Tung peninsula and the Island of Formosa, which last was ceded to them, along with a big indemnity, by China, in 1895.

Manchuria is a huge land with enormous possibilities and

yet almost untouched, and sparsely populated, which Russia will seize if Japan does not, and South Manchuria is flourishing under Japan's ninety-nine years' hire.

Formosa has still room for many thousands of Japanese. Though it does not come into the limelight of publicity, it is a large, wonderfully fertile island of 13,500 square miles. It produces large quantities of camphor, rice, tea, sugar and jute, and has rich mineral, gold and silver mines. Japan is absolutely paramount there and has overcome the fierce and uncivilized aboriginal tribes in a way that the Dutch, for instance, have never yet been able to do in Sumatra. At the same time Japan has much to learn in that respect. Her suzerainty over Korea has been too overbearing for the natives of that Land of the Midnight Calm, and revolt will yet appear.

But in the world of to-day, what country is there, governed by a Foreign Power, that is not seething with discontent? Japan has been called the Great Britain of the East. She is out to do her best, not only for her own people, but for those also in the countries where she holds her sway, encouraging them to do well for themselves in this world-wide struggle for existence. She is the marvel of the Pacific.

Her people work. Her rulers rule. She may not be very original, but she knows how to adapt, and she has been absorbing and adapting the best from every land for the past half-century, ever since the illustrious Prince Ito visited Europe and brought back knowledge of our educational and military systems as well as constitutional forms of government. He reorganized and reconstructed Japan which has responded by steady progression.

Many books are being published that deal with the Westernization of the Far East. It is a subject of much speculation and I always had it in front of me during my travels. In China it is largely superficial and has not yet influenced the interior to any extent. The Chinese are by no means as adaptable as the Japanese and vast inland provinces still stand aloof from the compelling power of Western methods such as those to which Shanghai, Tientsin and other Treaty Ports have succumbed.

In Japan there is a Westernization of spirit as well as of mechanics of life. The Japanese, even before the foreign commercial invasion, were nearer to the West than to China, from whence they had derived their older culture. Our machinery our industrial system, everything that is implied in the much

abused term "capitalism" are already working profound changes on the life and ideas of both Chinese and Japanese, especially the latter. This is naturally disconcerting to lovers of the Orient, as it was in the old "palmy" days, for there is so much that is precious in the Arts and Civilization of Old China and Old Japan that it is in the interest of the world that they be preserved.

I have found many of these Orientals open-minded and receptive of all that is told them. Sometimes I think that we in England are so full of smug self-satisfaction with our successful Empire that we do not pay sufficient attention to learning how other people live. In my own small way I have been trying to fill this gap. In every country there are ingenious and clever brains whose products we should be able to choose and adapt each to our own uses, while discarding the undesirable elements. There is absolutely nothing like travelling abroad for enlarging one's mental horizon.

May Heaven forbend any further wars in the Far East. It is so much easier to let loose the dogs of war than to call them off, and, as we have now learned to our cost, Peace which can only be bought at the expense of War is a chimera. In Europe we have only maintained peace, so far, by means of Sanctions and Mandates, which amount to little more than sitting on the lids of pots that will sooner or later boil over. Indemnities that have to be paid by the Masses, who had no say in belligerent undertakings, are chronic ulcers in the life of both parties concerned—the payers and the payees. China and Japan must settle their own quarrels. They alone understand one another.

This is such a beautiful world to live in if we can only live peacefully.

After all, we shall be dead such a long time, that it really seems worth while to live in unity, which can only be done by trying to understand each other and always remembering that there are two sides to every question.

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Hong Kong, like Hankow and other Treaty Ports, was a mud flat worth about a shilling an acre when it was ceded to the British in 1841. It is a wonderful city to-day. Most of the Chinese part is also successful, but British blood at work on a mud flat with a free hand and money from home accomplished marvels. It is not so easy to take an

old Chinese town and clean it up, break its traditions and give it new life. In Hong Kong every day seven or eight bodies are found by the police in the native quarters, for the natives save the expense of a funeral by putting them out for the police to remove or bury. Nasty diseases like beri beri come to light in this way. Still, the Chinese city of Hong Kong is a fine production to-day, and a wondrous contrast to dear filthy, delightful, evil-smelling, almost impossible Canton. Canton is potted China. The latter has remained in Chinese hands, all but the tiny island known as Shameen, which is a European reservation and therefore clean and orderly.

Here it was I could not stop long, for here it was so much firing took place in June and July, 1925.

When I first went to China via Japan in 1924 the Manchu Emperor was still on his throne, but when I landed back in China eighteen months later by Siberia he had been deposed and sent as an exile to Tientsin, where he lived quietly in the Japanese Concession till kidnapped in 1931 and sent to Manchuria to rule.

The Chinese Republic was formed in 1911, but he remained undisturbed with limited powers till '24. China remained more or less peaceful. Since then civil war, banditry, sovietism, famine, flood, plague and now war with Japan have all played their parts.

We had such a quaint tea party, the ex-Emperor, his charming and lovely young wife and myself, but as I have described it fully in "An Adventurous Journey" it need not be repeated here. My interview with the great War Lord Chang-Tso-Sin was even quainter; but for a like reason it must be omitted from this volume. It may not be out of place here, however, to quote from a letter sent to my son Harley when nearing Java in 1924:

"Dearest Harley,

"After 30 degrees of frost and $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet of ice across Manchuria to Mukden and Peking, here I am on the equator, simply sweltering. The poor cooks have it 120 in the kitchen and the laundry men 118, so I must not grumble at my cabin being 85°. Of course it's damp like Brazil or Khartoum and hence bad to bear.

"I was thrilled with the amazing British work at Hong Kong—70 miles drive up and down the Peak, etc., of British possessions with wonderful roads, grades, surface, cuttings . . . poor boosted San Francisco is knocked clean out by Hong Kong. I had no idea it was such a beautiful place. It was bristling

with British and Indian soldiers, ships, etc., and business most prosperous.

"Canton naturally was more paintable and I had twenty-eight hours good work with guns hard at it a mile away. Sun Yat Sen's gunboat running about and everyone armed. It reminded me of the conditions of Syria under the French two years ago. There were no trains—martial law—and everyone on edge; but I got a lot of sketches, both from the water and in the town. It's real China of 2,000 years ago. There will be more trouble there soon as Sun Yat Sen can't pay his soldiers or his police, and there is revolt. They were shooting beside me.

"Manila was an awful disappointment. The British in sixty-five years of Hong Kong have done amazing things; the Americans in twenty-five years of the Philippines have done little except put taxes against all outside goods and admitted all American goods free.

"Manila only has about 5,000 American soldiers against 20,000 at Havana, Panama and San Francisco; but she has a lot of ships and aeroplanes all paraded about for our gratification."

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Looking over the side of a launch one day at Canton in the evening glow I saw a bundle float past. It was a small, long, queer-shaped thing being wafted by the stream of the Pearl River away to the sea. Around were some of those gloriously picturesque old junks of picture fame. And there are said to be 100,000 sampans (barges) in Canton on which half a million people live.

"Do you know what that queer bundle is?" I queried my companion.

"What? That bundle?"

"Yes."

"That bundle is a baby."

"A baby," I exclaimed. "What do you mean by a baby?"

"That is a baby girl," he repeated quite calmly.

"A baby girl. How do you know it is a baby girl?"

"Because we constantly see baby girls drowned like that in Canton."

For the moment it took my breath away. One rather gasped at the idea of processions of drowned baby girls passing down to the sea, and yet, when one paused to think, realized how humane it really was.

The population of China is prodigious. (Five hundred million,

or a quarter of the whole globe.) The mouths to feed are more than the race can fill when famine comes, as it so constantly does. Men can work and shift for themselves. Women—who really appeared to me to work in China far harder than the men and certainly do so in the East generally—are not so well paid, and may, later in life, become a burden on their families. Happy baby girls. Better dead than starved. Before they had known the horrors, privations and miseries of the life of a poor class Chinese woman, almost before they had opened their little slit eyes on the world at all, they were dropped into the Canton river, and their tiny bodies were wafted to the sea, just as the Hindoos' ashes and bones tear along the Ganges to the ocean. How hygienic, how sensible, how sanitary, how wise.

Parentage is God's greatest blessing. Misapplied it is the Devil's curse.

Incidentally they were firing over my head in Canton and picking up the dead in the morning.

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For years I tried to go to China to stay with my friend, Morrison of Peking. It was too far, at least it took too long when boys' holidays were so insistent and the home influence called.

Pertinacity accomplishes most things. Real determination is an enormous factor. Not that flabby sort of determination which falls at the first fence and swerves at the water-jump, but dogged determination to do a thing or conquer circumstances.

But there came a day when boys' holidays and war work were over and I was free to do what I liked and stay as long as I wanted, so to the Far East I went, although almost frustrated at the start.

Entering New York I heard that "Japan was wiped out", from the newspaper headlines; then Morrison shot—and then earthquake scenes, Japan . . .

* * * * *

These ceaseless quarrels between Japan, China and Russia, over Manchuria, quarrels over complicated treaties and race hatred, may fizzle out as they have often done before. But they are the quarrels of the Orient and the Orient should settle them themselves.

CHAPTER XVII

ENGLAND IN SPIRITUAL AGONY

A temple of sorrow—Reconstruction—Greatest battles 150 miles from London and 50 from Paris—For what?—England disarms according to Pact—Can Empire rescue mankind?—Republics dishonest and expensive—Devilish Russian brains—Japan and Manchuria—A dilemma for the League—An amazing political week—November 8th-16th, 1931—Socialists fall—National Government, November 10th—World confidence in England restored—The King had done it—Mr. Balfour and Eugenics—Why God saved the King—Armistice Day, 1931—Weird incidents—Silence intense—A new vista of hope.

THE East is ablaze in the early days of 1932. Europe a Temple of Sorrow built upon foundations of spiritual agony.

National work did not end with the War. That end will be the dawn of a new era, a breaking with old conventionalities, the awakening of a new industrialism, the rebuilding of homes, the remodelling of nations. There remains much to do after the War to bring renewed health, happiness, industry, learning to all our battered countries, and to evolve a cleaner, better civilization. Fighting-men and soldier-women will each and all have their niche in reconstruction.

* * * * *

To peep backwards, let us remember Easter Sunday, 1918, and ten days of bloody battle behind us; ten days of battering, and our lines not pierced.

The great battle in the world's history was being waged 150 miles from London and 50 from Paris. The Germans were again fighting for Paris and the Channel ports, as they did in August, 1914; but they were now faced by a great Anglo-French army.

The great deeds of Mons, the Marne, Ypres and Verdun were as nothing to the titanic struggle of the last ten days. The British line had been bent back, but had remained unbroken, despite being opposed by half the German army, with, in some parts, eight of their divisions against one of ours.

That settled the War that Easter, 1918.

It drifted on for many more months, but the result was never again in doubt.

* * * * * * *

Yes, I expect great things of my own country—greater and greater things.

For centuries England has led the world to civilization and colonization. She must go on and on. Nelson, that great little Admiral, once said, "England expects every man to do his duty." Now Europe expects that Greater England and her vast Empire to do its duty and rescue the world from chaotic bloody persecution and destruction. But if we pause one moment and turn our eyes from the League of Nations, what do we see in 1932? *That England is the one and only country that has disarmed according to the pact.*

France and Italy are more armed than ever before, and their frontiers are bristling with military. Eleven Italian Bersaglieri stood beside my cabin trunk at Ventimiglia, the Italian frontier, in September, 1931. And on the French side above Mentone regiment after regiment of those terrible black Senegalese soldiers were making military roads. China and Japan are actually at war in Manchuria. Germany is all agog with Hitlerites and Nazis, armed and trained.

The United States has doubled and trebled all her three services while being a signatory to the Pact. The Danube?

Russia—what can we say of Russia? Personal letters tell me that the food and the queues are as cruel and as awful as they were six years ago when I was there, that a piece of soap made from petrol costs one pound, that the hotels still cost £4 a day and supply more bed bugs than anything else, that the old and enfeebled have been swept away or starved to death. And yet German and American engineers are raising huge factories and training tens of thousands of men and women to be themselves machines. Humanity is being ground into machinery. The women in the towns are marching and armed with rifles, no one knows their parentage, they are also machine grown. If the Five Year Plan succeeds, it will be due to German and American engineers and British gold paid for butter made from milk while the babies of Leningrad and Moscow die for want of it, paid for wood and windows and doors, while the people of Russia live in fifty degrees below freezing point without fuel. What is the end of it all?

Can our Empire rescue mankind? I believe so.

* * * * *

Is it amusing or tragic that we should be helping the Russians to ruin our own people? To know ourselves out of employment and pay our gold into Soviet banks to help their five-year plan, a plan that means the crushing out of all humanity and making human brain and brawn into machines?

* * * * *

I take off my hat to the Russians. Their devilish cleverness has duped the world.

The short bread queues I saw in Moscow six years ago are to-day often a mile long. But Russia sells its wheat outside (wheat grown by slave-labour which can be sold therefore at a cheap price) while the bulk of the people practically starve at home, except in the districts kept to show, and surprise, the silly foreign visitor. Why does Russia sell wheat? Because gold is paid to the heads of the Government in return for grain robbed from the peasant; gold for the Soviet Government, gold lost to England.

That cup of tea that cost me 7s. 6d., and that bath for 7s. 6d. cost just as much money to-day. My experience of £4 or £5 a day merely to live with the barest comfort and scanty food, would still, after five years, be the same. This alone shows that five years of Sovietism has not decreased prices, more than it has raised the allowance of bread. Doors and windows all ready-made by serfs and slaves are landed cheaply in England to oust our home-grown or Canadian brothers' wood and to swell unemployment.

And a tourist bureau has been opened in the heart of London, which takes visitors at £5 a day each to see the ready-made-show-spots of Russia. They travel along the only respectable railway line, where the stations have been cleaned and painted. The millions of beggars and vagabond-children have been sent far away. They are not a pretty sight for visitors and visitors must be impressed for £5 a day for Russian coffers. Some German and American factories have been born along this route to Odessa in the South, and make a fine show of workmanship and foreign energy. The Germans make munitions, while the Americans make thrashers and ploughs which lie about outside the factories in thousands, as few Russians can learn to drive or handle a machine. So the exhibition thrashers and ploughs are

short lived ; but they look well to the foreign eye. The Russians are too uneducated to handle machinery, and the percentage of breakages is appalling.

Republics are generally dishonest and always expensive and never picturesque. *Nous verrons.*

* * * * *

During the winter of 1931-2 the fate of the League of Nations was hanging in the balance over Manchuria.

China egged on by Russia exceeded her rights and forgot her agreements. Japan jumped up to protect her nationals. The League told them to kiss and be friends. They kicked instead and so the war I predicted five years before came on November 3rd.

Japan will win.

And the League ? We must wait and see its end later.

* * * * *

It really was a wonderful week, that second week of November, 1931—an amazing week in many ways. It was difficult for people living in the midst of history to realize day by day what was being moulded around them.

Here is a list of some of the significant events in the 1931 Armistice week :

- 9th Civic history ; The Lord Mayor's Show, and Banquet in the evening at the Guildhall, newly opened after a year of repairs and re-decoration.
- 10th The opening by His Majesty the King of the strangest and perhaps the strongest Parliament England or the world has ever seen, called National.
- The "Bond of Empire" (a Statute framed by the late Lord Balfour on half a sheet of notepaper) discussed by Empire statesmen at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society presided over by Lord Hailsham.
- 11th The thirteenth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice.
- 12th Growing movement against further Dumping. Revolution begins in England's trade with Tariffs for the first time in nine years.
- 13th Agreement almost reached between Five of the Indian Minorities. The first feeble ray of light from the Round Table Conference.

Announcement from Peking that the Ex-Emperor of China might become ruler of Manchuria—of whom more anon.

14th A marked, all-round improvement recorded in the textile industries, and steady increase in the volume of trade done in each of the following: Cotton, Wool Textiles, Lace and Hosiery, Drapery and Clothing, Iron and Steel, Cutlery, Coal, Pottery and Boots and Shoes.

Why?

Because the Socialist Government, after two years of disaster, had fallen, and world-confidence in England had been restored.

At tea given by the retiring Lord Mayor, Sir Phené Neale, in the refurbished and reopened Mansion House, with its fine new gallery and Banqueting Hall, by chance I was sitting next to a merchant from China, who told me that his firm had sold more during that month in the Far East than in the previous ten months. Why? Because China had boycotted Japan and we were pouring out Bradford woollens, Manchester cottons, Midland china and steel for use in the East.

"Buy British goods" was the dictum.

How amusing. Was the British housewife expected to examine every packet of pins, every turnip and carrot, every comb and hair-net before she made a purchase?

Poor housewife. The goods should never have been allowed free into the country at all, if they were of foreign make, to congest and be disadvantageous to British industries at the source. It's too ridiculous.

Free Trade sounds splendid. Yes, but the *world* must have Free Trade or the *world* must have Tariffs.

Streams of boats, big boats, little boats, medium boats raced to British shores all September and October, 1931. The mere murmur of a tariff set them a-sailing. London, the greatest port in the whole world, was besieged with craft from Russia. Germany sent her largest freight-carriers with toys and crackers for Christmas. Japan landed socks in such quantities that they had to be sold at 3d. a pair. Czechoslovakia hurried in glass and china and cheap jewellery, formerly made in our potteries in Birmingham. On they came, millions and millions of pounds' worth of wares, because the long-delayed talk of TARIFFS was in the air. There was no room to move at the ports for cases and tubs and bundles and baskets. The Socialists who had howled and yelled and almost fought physically in the Houses of Parliament for two years against tariffs—against their very own lives and occupations from sheer stupidity—had been ousted and on November 16th, 1931, England awoke.

Headed by that marvellous diplomatic salesman, the Prince of Wales, England awoke to the call "Buy British" and Parliament awoke from her own strangulation.

What an amazing week, forsooth.

One pound worth only fourteen shillings.

Our workpeople since the War have been paid too much and have worked too little for world competition. So we have been beaten overseas at our own game. Now is our chance to begin and raise our country to its former position as leader of the world in everything. We shall do it too.

From the time the Socialist Government took up the reins of power in 1929, down, down, down we went in the eyes of the world. We gave everything away both at home and abroad to the worthless and incapable. We lost credit at home and prestige overseas. We talked like leaking gasometers. We were in debt. In discredit. In despair. England and all that word stands for had become the laughing stock of the world.

Then, in September, 1931, we woke up and realized we were well-nigh down and out. The Socialistic innings of engine-drivers and coal-miners was over. Ramsay Macdonald turned his coat again. He pulled up his sleeves. He went to the country. He found the country awake. The country outvoted Labour and returned a more educated, a more widely-read, better-travelled lot to the House of Commons by a majority of 496.

MacDonald came out top as he richly deserved, and the stage was set for what may well prove to be the greatest political scheme in history. No man in politics ever had a greater opportunity. It came just three months after the flight from the pound on August 21st, 1931.

The House of Lords had rarely been as crowded during any previous opening of Parliament as it was on this occasion, where the lords of the realm that had recently been in such peril for-gathered to hear the King's speech.

Usually the peers find seating accommodation on the cross-benches, having ceded their usual seats to the ambassadresses, peeresses and ambassadors who sit in an improvised "pen". On this day, however, fully a hundred peers stood and looked a little self-conscious as the King uttered the time-honoured words: "My lords, pray be seated."

There is no moment, with the exception of the Two Minutes' Silence, more impressive than the entry of the King and Queen into the House of Lords. The lights are lowered prior to their

Majesties' entry, and suddenly blaze forth, revealing a pageantry unrivalled in the world—a background of scarlet for the glittering jewels of the peeresses.

Into this fairyland comes the Royal procession, the King leading the Queen by the hand up the steps of the throne.

* * * * *

During this momentous week it was interesting to hear, on the eve of Tuesday, November 10th, Lord Hailsham, Leader of the House of Lords and a great man, and the Hon. Stanley Bruce—another great man and a former Prime Minister of Australia (very handsome, with a charming manner, and altogether a fine representative of the Empire)—announce at the dinner at the Royal Empire Society Meeting how the late Lord (then Mr.) Balfour made the original notes on half a sheet of notepaper for the Statute designed to bind the whole Empire together—a prodigious scheme embodied in thirteen short words.

How few of us realize that the Empire covers a quarter of the globe. And at the pace we were going downhill our enemies were fixing their eyes on that vast expanse.

Yet Mr. Balfour proposed to bind all this great Empire together in one sentence scribbled in pencil on half a sheet of notepaper.

"Equality of status as between the Dominions and ourselves and between one another"—the simplicity of true greatness. This sentence was to be known finally as the Statute of Westminster. Seven eminent lawyers, after months of work and research, and after compiling documents totalling 120 paragraphs, were compelled to admit that they did not understand it, and the whole momentous Statute resolved itself—as Lord Hailsham and Mr. Bruce pointed out—into a question of goodwill, "that honour was satisfied, and that everybody had been told they were just as great as they would like to be", that "the enactment of the Statute of Westminster" would do a great deal "to wipe away misgivings, to establish confidence."

Which shows that all national and international, as all human relationships, come back to the bedrock principles of goodwill and understanding.

Lord Hailsham again struck the same note when he referred to the sentiment which binds the peoples of the Empire together written on that momentous scrap of paper.

* * * * *

Some of my happiest recollections are of Lord Balfour. He wrote a hand nobody could read. He made a speech the sentences in which did not end, and yet he was perfectly clear and lucid. He was thoroughly lazy by nature and absolutely brilliant in brain. I always felt terribly insignificant and small beside him, he was so enormously tall. Nature provided him with a stoop and so he came down to earth to chat with ordinary mortals. A great act of courtesy was his compliance with my request that he should take the chair for us at the first International Eugenics Conference dinner ever held, which I had the honour of organizing at the Hotel Cecil (1912).

It was Balfour's wonderful speech that brought the almost unknown subject of Eugenics into the forefront. His great name, his great position, his great charm started a great subject before a startled public. I had very carefully chosen a representative audience from every calling. He was electric. *The Times* the next morning gave him three columns, if I remember rightly. From that moment Eugenics have loomed more and more in the public eye.

Twenty years have done much. Let us hope twenty more will sterilize the unfit, the drunkards and the lunatics, and insist on health certificates for marriage, and birth-control according to the husband's means and the wife's wishes. Then we shall have a cleaner, wiser, healthier world with work and good for all.

* * * * *

But to return to Mr. Balfour. The day before that inaugural dinner, which I had the privilege of engineering, I wrote to him and said that as there was to be a reception afterwards for those from all quarters of the globe who could not find seats at the dinner, the space limiting us to five hundred, we hoped to begin proceedings exactly at 7.30, and it would be very kind of him if he could be there by that hour.

At 7.30 sharp he arrived.

"Here am I to order," he said cheerily. "And what do you want me to do?"

"If you were really nice," was my response, "you would stand between Major Darwin* and myself, and help to receive."

He looked crestfallen. He did not care for publicity.

"All these foreigners and Dominion folk would love to shake you by the hand," I persisted. "So you will be nice, won't you?"

*Our Chairman was the son of the great Charles Darwin, and nephew of Sir Francis Galton, who founded the Science of Eugenics.

"All right," conceded the tall, thin ex-Premier, looking down on me with his kindly eyes. And there he stood like a lamb, and shook hands with all the 500 passers-by, much to their joy.

"And whom am I to sit next?" he asked.

"I have put the wife of our most important foreign guest, a Frenchwoman, next to you."

"I hope she talks English then, because my French is not so good that it enjoys itself through a whole long dinner with a stranger."

"But it won't be a long dinner," I confidently replied.

"All public dinners are long," he protested; "they generally begin half an hour late, and drag on and on until yet another hour is wasted."

At that moment dinner was announced.

"Amazing," said the late Prime Minister, "only three minutes past the half-hour."

"And I hope you will leave the dinner-table at 9.45 sharp, Mr. Incredulity," I retorted.

"Impossible," he laughed, "especially with five hundred people present. Besides, I never knew a public dinner over in time yet."

"We shall see," was my cheery rejoinder. The French lady did not turn up, so, having arrived at his seat, Mr. Balfour asked the Chairman to send for me. Accordingly, to the top of the table I went—bouquet and all, for Mrs. Darwin had kindly given me, as representing the Entertainments Committee, a lovely bouquet.

"Hurry up the speeches, Toast Master," I whispered in passing that important personage, on whom I had already impressed punctuality. "We *must* leave this hall at 9.45." Looking round the room and seeing gaps here and there one reflected how cruel it was of people to accept invitations and then leave empty seats. But fate offered consolation strong enough to brush these minor regrets aside by filling the seats with eager folk only waiting for the chance. The dinner was over to the tick. Mr. Balfour was amazed; he didn't understand it at all.

"Quite simple," I laughed, "it was arranged by a woman."

"Then may a woman arrange every public banquet I go to in future," he merrily replied.

"Why not?" I asked. "We women spend the whole of our lives organizing and arranging, and yet you men absurdly

imagine that because you can run an office, you know more about organizing than we do. Woman's life is one long series of organizations."

It was hardly necessary to tell Mr. Balfour this, for he was one of the men in the House who from the first would have given qualified women the vote. Did he inspire Mr. Punch to send six women to the House of Lords?



Tea at House of Commons. The writer dispensing tea to the First International Eugenic Congress (1912), the social side of which she organized for 1,000 members.

We women have found our own. And yet it is a curse to be born a woman. My reasons are so strong I won't express them. Brains have nothing to do with sex. Sex dominates every time. . . .

I had the pleasure of introducing to him that night Sir William Ramsay, the great chemist. Strange but they had never met before. It was a pleasure to introduce them, but it was a pain afterwards for once they had started their chat, it seemed interminable. When two clever people get together they are like a magnet and a steel, there is no getting them apart except by brute force, and brute force is hardly polite after a dinner-party of good fellowship. An anxious queue was waiting

to say a word to the politician who had made the first public speech on the subject of Eugenics ; a speech that was wired all over the world.

That dinner was the beginning of a new scientific era.

Oh, dear, we are all so busy with good or bad things, feasts and ceremonies, all so busy discussing how we should rule the world, that we are in one great gasp of astonishment and have not time to realize in what an historical moment we are living.

How few of us realize. An interesting sidelight is thrown on the significant part played by King George V in the settling of the crisis which threatened England with immediate disaster in those fateful days of September, 1931, by the following story which was told to me by a friend.

A man—he was, in fact, a director of a great Bank—returned to his house on that famous Saturday night. “God save the King,” he exclaimed. “Now I know why God saved the King’s life.

“The King has saved England to-day.

“England will save the world.”

The King had been interviewing all day politicians, bankers and diplomats. It was indeed a busy day for a delicate gentleman of sixty-eight who had been travelling by train from Scotland all the previous night.

That was the morning the King had sent for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, for Mr. Baldwin and for Sir Herbert Samuel, and had spent an hour with each. Everyone supposes that during those eventful hours His Majesty explained to each leader, separately and in turn, that the country was much more important than party politics. Owing to the fall in the pound to a little more than 15s., and to the break-up of confidence brought about by the experiments of the Socialist Government, it was imperative that England should pull herself together as an example to the world. Whatever was said, the effect was magical. God save the King.

In every country I have ever been in in my life where there has been a President, the President has always seemed to be impotent at critical moments and his Government not always honest. Thank God for the traditions of royalty, for their knowledge, wisdom and power. Just as Queen Victoria and King Edward the Seventh used all their force at critical moments in our Empire history, so King George enacted almost a miracle.

* * * * *

A short time only elapses and we come to Armistice Day, 1931, the thirteenth Armistice Day, and for one million, one hundred thousand of us mothers a lonely and sad occasion, not to mention the wives of men. Eleven o'clock—and silence.

What a medley of thoughts and events.

A man and a woman (both total strangers) rang up at that sacred hour to ask for money, because they hoped to play on my feelings at such a time. The man said, as so many had done before, that he had helped to bury one of my sons. The woman boldly asked for help. Could they really expect on this day money from a stranger who had her quiver-full of friends to help? Well, well—what won't the undeserving do. But it is the working of the minds of such people about which one is perturbed. And yet another thought arrived from Constantinople, in faultless English, from a great French princess bearing the name of one of Napoleon's famous generals:

"Dear Mrs. Tweedie,

"Your card followed me to Stamboul. I was so sorry not to be able to meet you while you passed through Paris. I enjoyed your book tremendously and will never forget your charming welcome. What a sight London must have been the day you heard the results of the election. You can't imagine how excited I was. All that happens in England has an echo in my heart. Everyone here is watching your country."

* * * * *

That Thirteenth Day of Remembrance had dawned warm and sunny. A soft pearl haze hung over the Green Park below my feet, forming a kind of transparent curtain, behind which the façade of Buckingham Palace rose into the morning sky. I turned from the balcony window and sat in silence, waiting for the service at the Cenotaph to come through on the wireless. Dreams and memories flooded into thoughts.

How wonderful was that wireless; every bugle note, every word, even the tramping of feet from Whitehall were made clear by this marvellous modern invention. Then the gun sounded. The roar of Piccadilly ceased. Omnibuses stood still as if by magic a hundred feet below my window.

Men, women and children and dogs stopped silent on the pavement and the pathways crossing St. James's Park. Not a leaf stirred. No one seemed to breathe.

"And all that mighty heart was lying still." That silence was intense.

Many will remember that it was an Armistice Day three years before that had nearly cost the King his life.

And so this famous week closed. A new world was before us and

A New Vista of Hope.

Britain leads again. Six months after the National Government was formed, she had balanced her budget, largely repaid her emergency loan to France and the States, had orders for five millions worth of goods at her Empire Fair and by Easter, 1932, Britain had made Tariffs, and Britain was again ready to lead the world.

Well done, Brilliant Britain.

The Tide has turned.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MOONLIGHT PARTIES

Why keep the Moonlight all to myself?—I call in the Astronomer Royal—My first "Moonlight Party"—My Bar—The Moon and the Barrel—My Four Field-M Marshals—Mr. Haselden's Caricature—"The Success of the Season"—Miss Lucy Kemp-Welch's visiting card—A Day too late for the Fair—"On tap at 11 o'clock"—Lord d'Abernon—Ibsen on England's old Men—"At their best at Seventy"—My difficulty with names—My fifth Moonlight party—Hector in despair—Pilsen this time—The Cigarette Box that vanished—Its mysterious return—Two tributes—"And so to bed."

OFTEN the thought had occurred to me—why should I enjoy the moonlight all by myself?

This persistent idea eventually ended in the determination to give a "Moonlight Party". More especially as the naughty leg was perfectly cured after 15 months of tender care.

But how was one to be sure that the moon would shine and that the weather would be warm? These were questions of deep concern for the Moonlight Party.

Having the most delightful friends in the world, in every walk of life, from the humblest to the highest—and after all, friends are the greatest asset any of us can possess—why not be bold and consult the oracles—impudence wasn't it? But, oh, how appreciated—one dared to look to the stars and ventured to send a line to the Astronomer Royal, Sir F. W. Dyson, who has personal contact with the Heavens; and also to bother the Earl of Dunboyne, who is an intimate friend of the clerk of the weather.

The oracles were wise, the moon and stars and temperature were kind, and so those moonlight parties became a sort of institution. But still the anxiety was great. Five weeks beforehand was too long to be certain. So all the cards and envelopes had to be got ready and stamped and kept back for the pistol fire to start the race. When the word came "go", off went the six hundred invitation cards which collected over four hundred people a time.

Six hundred may sound a lot. But what are six hundred

invitations when one's address book for London alone contains twelve hundred entries, and twelve hundred entries means nearly double that number of persons. First one had to invite the people whose hospitality had been enjoyed; then one's oldest friends.

Exactly three weeks before my first party, Lord Dunboyne had announced:

1. "The warmest night will be Sunday, July 1st." (That I had to give up because so many people were out of town on Sunday.)

2. "Monday the 2nd should be quite warm and good."

3. "Tuesday the 3rd it will rain."

I chose July 2nd.

It was exactly as prophesied. The most gorgeous scarlet moon rose immediately opposite my flat windows, between Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral. There were a few clouds about, and as the hours went by the moon yellowed, and passed away towards Battersea peeping at us in and out of the silvery night clouds. As Lord Allenby said, it was the most perfect effect he had ever seen—Lord Allenby is at heart an artist, greatly interested in Nature. The next night it poured.

* * * * *

When I had had the head man from the Devonshire House Restaurant up, to give him my orders, I had told him I wished for an eighteen gallon cask of the very best Munich lager beer he could produce.

"An eighteen gallon cask?" he asked, amazed.

"Yes," I said, "I cannot afford champagne or any of those cups, but I can and will afford an eighteen gallon cask of the very best Munich beer you can produce."

"Do you know what an eighteen gallon cask means, madam?"

"Certainly. I was brought up with them."

He looked horrified. The gentleman who was Head of Devonshire House Restaurant was truly aghast that any resident of such a place as Devonshire House should have been brought up with eighteen-gallon casks of beer.

"Yes. I was brought up with them. I well remember as a child the casks of Bass's Beer coming to my Father's house in Harley Street, where I was born, for the butler and footman; and occasionally a frothing jug for someone appeared in the dining-room."

He looked a little relieved when I mentioned a butler and footman. But he still continued, "Do you know a cask like that contains 244 glasses?"

"No," I answered. "That I did not know."

"Madam, you will never use 244 glasses."

But I knew we would.

Accordingly, a fortnight before the allotted day, the beer arrived, and he put it down in the depths of his cellar until the right moment came for it to appear. Then I insisted on having it stood very high up on trestles and the proper cellarman with his big white apron to come up and dispense the beer.

There was not one drop of the two hundred and forty-four glasses left. And Ambassadors and Cabinet Ministers murmured into my ear that it was the most delicious thing they had ever drunk; on a hot night it was perfect, and they had each of them enjoyed more than one glass.

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Luckily there was a large empty flat adjoining mine at that time, so I arranged the little "Café" somewhat in the fashion of a Hotel Bar. The greater part of it was taken up with chairs and small tables. At one end of it was a Bar—yes, a real Bar, piled with tea, coffee and various plates of cakes and sandwiches. And there, beside the Bar, perched in all its dignity, was a trim barrel of beer, ready for action. It was the same kind of barrel one sees in Viennese restaurants—clean and inviting, with its hoops all rubbed up. And on the top sat a sort of golliwog to amuse the people.

The night was warm and the contents of the barrel were cold, icy cold. What more perfect combination, thought my guests. There was a run on that barrel as soon as they entered the room, and when I saw what a success it was I felt grateful to my two friends the Moon and the Beer for putting everyone in such good humour. The word *Café* and the suggestion PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELVES did the rest.

Kind people said, "Oh, do give another." But is it ever wise to try and repeat a success along the same lines? I doubted it. Success, like failure, is not to be defied. Anyhow, I did give another, and here is the list of acceptances as given in *The Times* for the second party, for July 3rd, 1928. And still gave another and another, until the number mounted up to five. But I will leave the description to other people.

MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE.

Mrs. Alec-Tweedie gave a moonlight reception on her roof garden at Devonshire House last night. Among those who accepted invitations were :

The Italian Ambassador, the German Ambassador and Frau Sthamer, the Brazilian Ambassador, the Norwegian Minister and Mrs. Vogt, the Chilean Minister and Mme. Huneus, the Peruvian Minister, the Persian Minister, the Egyptian Minister, the Greek Minister, the Estonian Minister, the Lithuanian Minister, the Afghan Minister, the Chinese Minister, the Finnish Minister and Mme. Saatamoinen, the Latvian Minister and Mme. Vesmans, the Japanese Charge d'Affaires, the Maharajah of Burdwan, the High Commissioner for New Zealand and Lady Parr, Sir Thomas and Lady Robinson, Sir John and Lady Tilley, Sir Ronald and Lady Macleay, Lord and Lady Desborough, the Earl and Countess of Denbigh, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Secretary of State for the Home Department, and Lady Joynson-Hicks, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Secretary of State for War, and Lady Worthington-Evans, the Earl of Meath, the Earl and Countess of Stradbroke, the Earl and Countess of Lytton, Sir John and Lady Simon, Sir John and Lady Maffey, Sir Robert Horne, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald McKenna, Lord and Lady Carson, Lord and Lady Lamington, Lord and Lady Bertie of Thame, Sir Granville and Lady Rynie, Mrs. Stanley Baldwin, Field-Marshal Viscount and Viscountess Allenby, Field-Marshal Sir Claud Jacob, the Marquess of Reading, Lord and Lady Dawson of Penn, Lord and Lady Melchett, Major-General Sir George and Lady Younghusband, Major-General Sir William and Lady Beynon, Major-General Sir John Hanbury-Williams, Lady Ludlow, Admiral Mark Kerr, Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle, Vice-Admiral Sir Ernle and Lady Chatfield, Vice-Admiral Sir Herbert and Lady Richmond, Lieutenant-General Sir William and Dame Katherine Furze, Lieutenant-General Sir Raleigh and Lady Egerton, Sir Beechcroft and Lady Towse, Sir Gilbert Parker, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Vyell and Lady Vyvyan, Sir Henry and Lady Penson, Sir Edward and Lady Crowe, Sir Arthur Sloggett, Lieutenant-General Sir George and Lady McMunn, Sir Bernard and Lady Partridge, Sir Horace and Lady McMahon, Lord and Lady Arthur Browne, Mr. and Mrs. John Walter, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Milne, Mr. Melton Fisher. Brigadier-General Sir Gordon Guggusburg.

Major-General Sir Neil and Lady Malcolm, Lord and Lady Clanmorris, Commander and Mrs. Louis Greig, General Sir Ian and Lady Hamilton, Lady Ratan Tata, Lord and Lady Charnwood, Major-General Sir Percy and Lady Cox, Sir Edward Wallington, Major-General Sir Leopold Swaine, Lord and Lady Forbes, the Recorder of London and Lady Wild, General Sir John and Lady Maxwell, Major-General Sir Percy and Lady Sykes, Sir Martin Conway, Sir William and Lady Bragg, Professor Donnan, Dr. and Mrs. F. W. Goodbody, Lieutenant-General Sir George and Lady Macdonough, Sir Montague Barlow, Dr. Marie Stopes, Sir Henry and Lady Bax-Ironside, Captain Sir Cecil Armitage, Captain the Hon. Frederick and Mrs. Guest, Captain and Mrs. Hylton Phillipson, Sir S. and Lady Reid, Sir William and Lady Allardyce, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Greiffenhagen, Sir Michael and Lady O'Dwyer, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fleming, the Dowager Lady Swaythling, Major-General Sir John and Lady Duncan, Dr. Douglas Gray, Commander and Mrs. Bellairs, Sir H. and Lady Hughes-Stanton, Sir Louis and Lady Dane, Brigadier-General and Mrs. Spiers, Air Vice-Marshal Sir John and Lady Higgins, Major-General Sir Charles Melliss, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Thesiger, Mrs. Lilian Braithwaite, Mrs. Fred Terry, Mr. Ben Webster and Dame May Whitty, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Maxwell, Colonel the Master of Semphill, Brigadier-General Sir Charles and Lady Selme-Radcliffe, Mrs. Fagan, Mr. Justice and Lady Salter, Mrs. Nesta Webster, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Sefton Branner, Sir Cecil and Lady Harcourt-Smith, Mrs. Violet Markham, General Sir R. and Lady Hutchinson, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Bevan, Major-General Sir Wyndham and Lady Childs, Sir William and Lady Max-Müller, Sir Henry and Lady Cowan, Sir Trevor and Lady Dawson, Sir William and Lady Simpson, Colonel Sir Arthur and Lady Dick, Sir Francis Blake, Sir Denison Ross, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Yates, Colonel and Mrs. Boyd-Cable, Mr. John Baird, Sir James and Lady Crichton-Browne, Sir John and Lady Bland-Sutton, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Baumer, Sir Percy and Lady Cunynghame, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Nicholson, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Body.

Yes, I had often asked myself if I had the courage to go back to London and start a new life alone. And I had nearly failed in the effort. That night as four hundred and twenty-three friends shook my hand I had said to myself, "Yes, it was worth the effort. Such old friends as these were worth any struggle to keep and any effort to obtain the new ones around me. God bless them."

And I reflected how "only a woman" born in Victorian days had fought her fight for her sex, and these bright, beautiful, dancing girls were reaping the reward of that freedom and the jobs now opening before them in the women's work market.

My second party.

The night was warm and clear. My rooms were packed and the verandah was kept crowded with interested spectators of the wonderful panorama that stretched for miles around. Some peered through an astronomical telescope at the Mountains of the Moon, others were fascinated by the life of the streets below, while others engaged in discussion as to what the various landmarks were. The young folk, and some of the elder ones too, danced energetically to a small zingari band little heeding the heat.

The following kindly notice signed "Perigrinetta" is taken from *The Daily Chronicle*.

A PERFECT NIGHT.

"If London parties were always like this party and June weather like this June night," said General Dunsterville, the original model for "Stalky", to me on Tuesday night, "I should not mind staying here." The party was Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's one for the moon, and the moon shone in the heights of a blue-black sky so brilliantly that the light of the stars was dimmed.

WELL MIXED.

And the party was one of those perfect ones which are "well mixed". There were Ambassadors not a few, and almost as many artists, from Mr. Bernard Partridge to the young sculptor, Mr. Cecil Thomas; there were travellers and explorers and Army men, clever women, like the Dowager Lady Swaythling, Lady Trustram Eve, and Mrs. Lionel Harris. The lovely Maharanee of Cooch Behar was there with Mr. Kindersley, Mrs. Robert Anning Bell, etc. Men talked lightly of "D'ye remember in Constantinople?" or "That year of the famine in the provinces," "The street riot in Bucharest in 1900," and even octogenarians like Sir James Crichton Browne, who is 87, and Sir Alexander Campbell, who is 81, grew lyrical under the moon.

ROOF PARTIES.

Let us have more roof parties. London took on a new aspect, looking down at it from the great height of Mrs. Tweedie's roof-garden on Devonshire House. The new electrically-lit dome of St. James's Station glowed over the trees of the park, which looked at one with the wide tree-lined road, since the railings were hardly distinguishable; clusters of lights were strung together in the distance like fallen constellations. But both youth and age deserted the roof occasionally for iced beer and sandwiches and the dance-room, where, in large letters on the wall, hung the invitation, "*Please introduce yourselves*". And they did.

Acceptances had arrived from four Field-M Marshals, but I was genuinely sorry to receive this note from Sir Wm. Robertson :

"My dear Mrs. Alec,

25. 4. 31.

"So very nice of you to ask me particularly to come to you on Friday evening next. But this morning it has been definitely settled that I must go to Kent on that day for the week-end, otherwise I had fully intended to come. But what will you be doing until *One* a.m. ? Every good wish to you.

"From yours very sincerely,

"WM. ROBERTSON."

Clemence Dane, who had inadvertently been invited with "husband", sent this gay little rejoinder :

"Dear Mrs. Tweedie,

"It was so nice of you to write. I'm so glad you liked the Broadcast. (One of her own plays.) I was awfully pleased with it myself. I'd love to come to-night only I shan't be in town, *and* haven't got a husband. But thank you very much for asking me—the picture looked lovely.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CLEMENCE DANE."

And although Bernard Shaw posted me a neatly written refusal from Paris on one of his eternal postcards, I regarded him as "all present and correct"—in spirit, though not in the flesh.

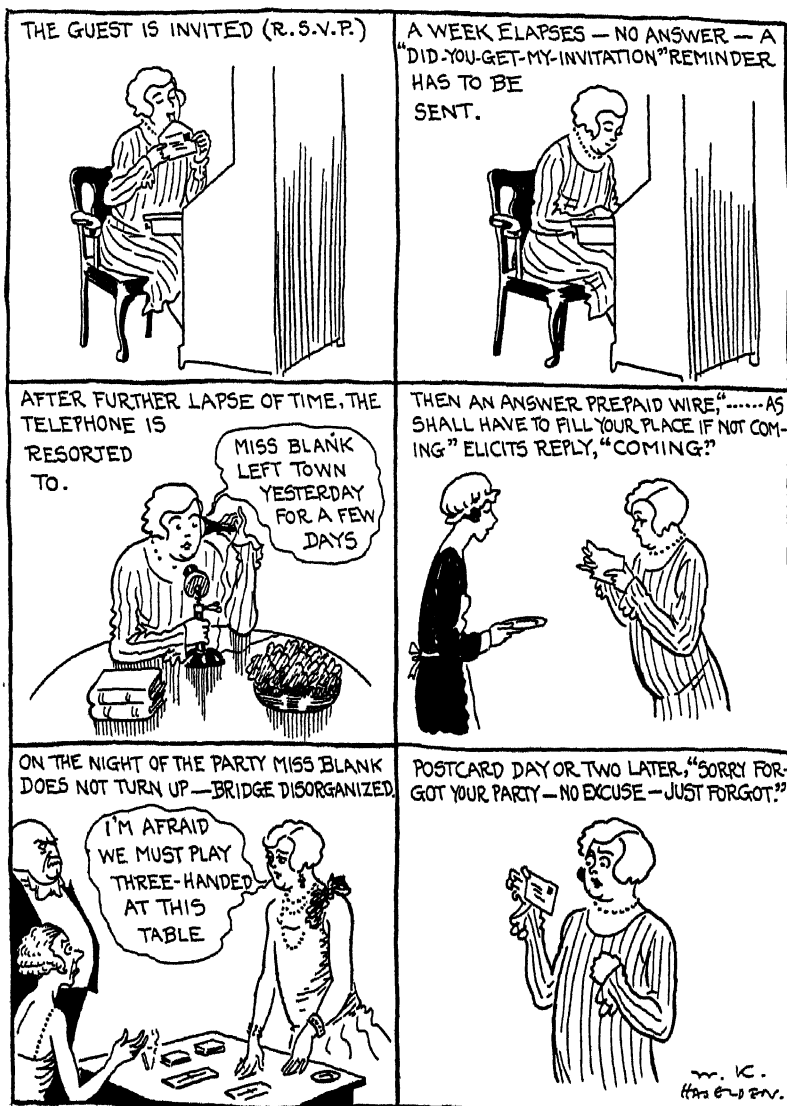
"As you see, I am out of reach of Mayfair, and I doubt whether we shall be back by the first. But anyhow, do wise men of my age inflict themselves on the young things that enjoy mooning from 9.30 to 1 ?

"I am always in bed by 12, in spite of the fatal effect of that rule on Arnold Bennett.

"G. BERNARD SHAW."

Mr. Haselden sent a copy of a cartoon he had especially drawn a hostesses dilemmas, which is reproduced overleaf.

Lord Dawson of Penn sent a very charming card of appreciation received before luncheon next day, although only posted three hours previously, so quick is the London post.



An inspiration by W. K. Haselden after the author's remark that invited guests were casual.—By kind permission of the *Daily Mirror*.

32, Wimpole Street, W.1.

"Dear Mrs. Alec-Tweedie,

"I must send you a line anent that wonderful reception last night—a veritable feast of beautiful things.

"Greetings and thanks,

"Yours sincerely,

"DAWSON."

And another from a dear friend of many years' standing.

"My dear most wonderful one,

"What a success last night—and enjoyed myself no end. I do not think I have *ever* seen such a hostess. Looking after everybody and seeing no one was left out. Everyone was so pleasant. I talked to lots of people I did not know and they were so interesting and contented to talk to me. You must be dead tired to-day—you never sat down but spent yourself looking after other people. 'God save the King' was the only thing that got one away, and we were home by 2 a.m. Not bad, was it? The weather really did behave well. I sat out with a man who wanted to smoke and was not a bit cold, that screen made all the difference—and how well you had arranged all your paintings in your bedroom—people were so interested in them . . .

"I trust you are in bed and will take a rest for the remainder of the week. I know what organizing a thing like that means and nothing was forgotten and no crush and I should think nearly 500 people. Everyone was loud in your praise. I do not intend having this posted till to-morrow as you ought not to have any unnecessary letters to open or read to-morrow—the day after will not matter. I was so sorry we were able to do so little to help you but you know how willing we were to do all we could."

Lady Waterlow, the Lady Mayoress, a much engaged woman, wrote from the Mansion House, and her letter was received within a few hours.

"Dear Mrs. Alec-Tweedie,

"How very kind indeed of you to ask us to your wonderful party. Both my husband and I enjoyed it immensely and send you our warmest thanks for all the pleasure you gave us. I hope you were not too tired but fear you could not be otherwise, you were so kind to everyone.

"With all kind thoughts,

"Yours very sincerely,

"ADELAIDE H. WATERLOW."

While the late Prebendary Gough, one of the most popular men in London, said in a note from Oxford :

"I am hoping to see the Moonlight at Devonshire House on the 1st. You will make the place bright, whatever the moon may do, with your charming hospitality.

"I have been getting two or three days here."

Four hundred faces swam before me, the faces of cherished and honoured friends. My return to London had been rewarded.

Yes, another successful party and yet not a soul to talk anything over with. I live alone, so am like a fork without a knife. There was no boy to sit on the bed and chatter till the small hours.

The Press called it "the success of the season".

The loaned eight-roomed flat was shut up. The 150 lanterns (many brought from China and Japan) and chairs were hauled in from the balcony. The telescope man packed his instrument away for another year, and, dead beat, worked out, with swollen feet and tired eyes, I went to bed. A little chat might have sent me to sleep—instead, I lay awake and thought of my sons lying in foreign lands, and how they would have enjoyed the success of it all . . .

* * * * *

I had never seen the telescope fixed, for I was called away after showing the man the place.

Two days later I heard that the balcony had been so packed all night with nearly a hundred people at a time there was barely standing room. I heard that the wonderful wireless had clearly repeated the massed bands from 9.30 to 12 p.m. of the Aldershot Tattoo. Then, in the third and fourth days I learned how successful the dancing and band—and beer—had been. I had seen almost nothing, being tied to one spot by the ceaseless flow of over four hundred people with four hundred hands to shake in three hours. This meant shaking hands twice every minute for four hours, but in between I did get a moment towards the end of the evening. Little Miss Lucy Kemp-Welch came up and said : "Have you got a notebook and pencil anywhere ?"

"On my writing-table," I replied, "on a shelf there."

Of course I thought she wanted to write down an address. People are always asking for blocks and pencils to write notes or addresses, and I gave the matter no further thought.

The next afternoon, I happened to take up the block to write something myself, and lo, on the front first page was a perfectly beautifully drawn head of a horse. When she did it, how she did it, I know not. But she had left this delightful piece of her draughtsmanship behind "as a visiting card, in gratitude for a pleasant evening." A very pretty touch from a very charming little lady. . . .

* * * * *

Tips. If you want your party to be a failure, clear the room. If you want it to be a catastrophe, put seats all round.

People have an absurd fashion of clearing out all their furniture and then stacking every sort of chair gleaned from attic to kitchen round their empty drawing-room walls.

What happens ?

People peep in, see an empty room, with perhaps two or three funny old people sitting in odd corners, speak to the hostess until the next visitor is announced, and then in sheer fright slip down the stairs and away.

Never empty the middle of your room. Always have high plants or flowers or something to screen the gaping eyes from one another. Get your chairs into twos and twos, or sofas sticking out from the wall and not against it, and unless the hostess is a miserable creature, not worthy of the name of hostess, your party will be successful.

The day of the party, the telephone bell never ceased to ring. One person after another rang up to know if they might bring a daughter, or a mother, or an aunt, or a cousin or even a grandmother, to see the moon. Sternly, very sternly I made my secretary reply that I expected about four hundred people, there would be an awful crush and I had not been able to ask even half of my own friends, so I must decline.

Then came the *comble*. A woman rang up to say sweetly that two friends had on Monday, the night before, arrived from the United States, and she thought it would be delicious for them to see an English Party on a roof in the Moonlight. Now this really was the last straw. I told the girl to hurry back to the telephone and inform the operator that my machine was to be cut off until the following morning.

What are we coming to ? The gate-crashers of the last two or three years have been more or less eliminated by stamping "Please bring this card with you" on the card. But the cheek

of people, men too as well as women, thinking they can entertain their friends at their own friends' expense, is a bit too much. Each room holds so many people; each meal has to be paid for; and had I received these extra fifty people whom they tried to hurl upon me that morning, they might just have overbalanced the Party and made it a failure. As it was I had at least twenty men to the good and it was a success.

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Parties have their comic side.

The next night, a very well known man dressed himself up in his best, bought a very beautiful white carnation and presented himself in the Hall for the party. Imagine his dismay when he was told it had been the night before. He went home disconsolate, and wrote me four pages cursing himself and his stupidity for entering it in his engagement book for the wrong night. Another little episode was amusing:

A well known Colonel from the War Office came to my next At Home.

"You are angry with me," he said.

"Yes."

"I know, and you are quite right."

"Of course I am," I replied laughing.

"Well," he said, "yesterday morning there was no work done in the War Office. All the Generals were discussing beautiful ladies, moonlight and lager beer and telescopes and fairy scenes and Japanese ladies in Japanese dresses, and Indian Princesses in Indian dresses, and everyone seemed to have been at your Party except me."

"Yes?"

"I know," he replied, "I haven't been to call on you for over a year. I have constantly meant to do it and I didn't, and I have been duly punished by receiving no invitation." Then with a merry twinkle. "Here I am to tell you how truly sorry I am, and this is my call in good time for the party next year please."

He is a dear, light-hearted cheery creature. But it takes a big man to do a thing like that—a veritable *amende honorable*. We parted the best of friends and he assured me he would look in once a month regularly until I gave another Moonlight Party.

* * * * *

It is amusing to see different opinions of the same function. "Joan" of the *Daily Chronicle* (May 14th, 1930) wrote :

THE MISSING MOON.

About a quarter to twelve, when the hum of conversation and the dancing and the clinking of forks on plates was at its height at Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's "Moonlight party", the hostess dashed through the rooms exclaiming, "She's out. She's out," and there was a general rush through all the doors on to the roof garden at the top of Devonshire House.

There, sure enough, was a glimmer from the moon. But, alas, the clouds never cleared away sufficiently for us to enjoy London bathed in moonlight, and in about five minutes the last vestige of the moon disappeared again.

CELEBRITIES.

Not that it mattered ; there were far too many amusing people gathered together to give anyone a dull moment.

I encountered the Japanese and Polish Minister, Admiral Sir Sidney Fremantle, Lady Swaythling, who was in a definitely Velasquez black velvet frock, with lace lappets and paniers, Mrs. Ernest Thesiger, whose lovely placid face also rose out of a black velvet gown, Mr. Cecil Thomas, the sculptor, the Lord and Lady Mayoress, Lady Cowan, and Sir John and Lady Henry—the latter has made a simply marvellous recovery from her bad fall while hunting a couple of years ago, and told me she hadn't lost her nerve a bit.

THE CHAPERONE'S FEAR.

Lady Dawson of Penn was easily one of the most striking figures scattered through the rooms. Her hair has now grown long enough to put into a knot behind, and when she sits down in an armchair, her head erect and her rather beautiful hands lightly folded on her lap, she makes a perfect picture of the observant woman with a sense of humour, who can, at the same time, remain tranquil.

Lady Dawson, like myself, was obliged to leave before midnight—but not to rest. She was chaperoning her daughter to a dance, and confided to me what she declared was the chief preoccupation of chaperones during the hours they "sit with their backs to the wall, often with cold feet". It is, "Will my hot water bottle be cold when I get into bed ?"

NEEDLE AND THREAD.

Mr. Ernest Thesiger was, naturally enough, very interested in Mrs. Tweedie's collection of Chinese and Japanese embroidery. Old English embroidery and what not because he's great on stitchery himself.

The gossip writer of the *Evening Standard* wrote as follows :

NO MOON TO BE SEEN.

Thanks to the weather the only guest who saw the moon last night at Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's "moon-light" party was the man who diligently inspected the skies through a huge telescope on the terrace of her beautiful flat at the top of Devonshire House, and reported towards midnight that he had seen it for three minutes.

But the lack of moonlight was made up to a great extent by the really picturesque flood-lights over St. James's Park Station, a fine view of which is obtained across the Green Park from the windows of the flat.

THE PIPES IN PICCADILLY.

Other attractions included dancing to a gipsy band in the spacious rooms of an unfurnished flat which adjoins that of Mrs. Tweedie.

At midnight a piper paraded the balcony to the tune of his bagpipes, to the entertainment not only of the guests at the party but of stray pedestrians passing along Piccadilly.

A pleasing feeling of informality pervaded the party, helped by a notice in the hall: "Please introduce yourselves."

A small room had been turned into a bar, complete with a barrel of beer. This, too, was labelled, "On tap at 11 o'clock," after which hour it proved a popular diversion.

The hostess has met almost everyone of note during her life of travel and adventure, and among her guests one found such diverse personalities as Mr. Richard Jack, the artist, Mr. and Mrs. Anning Bell, Mr. Phillips Oppenheim.

The fourth occasion the moon had failed me. She had only appeared intermittently, so I thought this fifth time I would call it "MOONSHINE" and that could suit anything.

After all, life is about 90 per cent moonshine with 10 per cent really worth living for our very own selves.

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Lord d'Abernon came, one of the cleverest men I have ever met. He has a profound knowledge of finance, horses and pictures, and no delusion about Russia.

The Private View of the Royal Academy had been that day and John's now famous portrait of Lord d'Abernon in full diplomatic uniform had been much discussed. As he was standing beside me, I heard first one bunch of people saying: "What a splendid portrait," and another group: "How perfectly terrible." Yes, a magnificent figure is Lord d'Abernon. I met him first at the Embassy in Berlin, where he was most kind to me on my way to Russia in 1925. Very tall, and broad and robust of build, with a little white pointed beard like Sir Maurice de Bunsen, and Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle, who are both about his height, though slimmer. England may well be proud of her men, as long as there are such fine specimens of the sex between sixty and seventy, virile in brain and body, verily masters of men; and as I think I said somewhere else in print, Ibsen once told me in Christiania where I saw a great deal of the old man at the end of the last century:

"Your Englishmen are amazing when they are old. I cannot speak your language, but I would like to go to England just to meet your old men. They seem at their best at seventy, by which time those of most other nations are dead."

* * * * *

It has been rather amusing at different Moonlights how the unexpected has happened. On the last occasion diplomatic friends arrived from China that very morning and had to be much "ironed" before clothes from suitcases could be made presentable for evening. Bertram Thomas straight from crossing

the Southern desert of Arabia, only arrived the night before. But he came early and stayed late. At another Moonlight Party it so chanced also to be the Private View day again and one of the subjects of the year was the three beautiful Miss Sen's, nieces of Her Highness the Dowager Maharanee of Cooch Behar, who came in the same lovely sarees in which they were painted.

Names, or rather the lack of them, have been a serious trial to me, but I generally remember who the people are, in the flesh ; and what their job is, or where they have come from, so introduce one pal to another and often without remembering their names but glib enough with Bombay or Khartoum or some Public dinner.

If only the dear things one meets would say : "I'm Mrs. Smith and I met you in Honolulu," or "I'm Mrs. Jones and we met in Bond Street," or "I'm Captain Robinson and you came to my picture show twenty years ago," or "We met in St. Andrews when your husband was playing golf." Then I might collect my scattered stupidity ; but they only say, "I'm sure you don't remember me ?" or "you never know me."

Not helpful as no one but an arrant fool would ever cut anyone for choice.

Do let us institute labels for the evenings at all big shows (like buttonholes) and in the biggest black lettering bear our names. It would be such fun, and conversation would flow.

* * * * *

The fifth Moonlight Party was a jig-saw puzzle. Half the large empty flat facing my own had been sold, including the large kitchen and the entrance from the other side of the building. How on earth was one to have three or four hundred people in those four remaining rooms, my own four rooms and of course the roof garden which easily accommodates about a hundred, and up and down that balcony piped a real highland piper in a real highland kilt and real pipes.

Hector, the head of the Restaurant below (now the head of Claridges), came up to give his advice. First of all he shook his head in despair. "How, Madam, can coffee for four hundred people be served without any serving room ?"

"I have not the foggiest idea," I replied. "But the barrel of Lager Beer can stand on its trestles in that corner and perhaps you could make the coffee in this cupboard."

He looked at the cupboard, decided it could take a small man and several hundred saucers and plates, stacked like apples in a barn on trays, but the coffee, ah, that was the question. "It must be done at the back of the table," he explained. "You see the buffet table is very high, and the white cloth can hang down to the floor and with great huge urns I think we can manage." He did. About four hundred and twenty-three people came up in the lifts and they were fed in what I called the "Café" with coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches and cakes at eight little round tables, and a big barrel of beer, this time from Pilsen, iced for days in a cold cellar, holding two hundred and forty-four glasses, real German glasses to boot, was duly tapped at 11 o'clock and completely finished by twelve.

* * * * *

The morning after the Moonlight Party, the maid and the faithful charlady were hard at work putting the place straight when one of them said :

"Did you put away the silver cigarette-box, Madam?"

"No," I replied.

"Well, it is not on the tray with the match-box and things."

"Never mind," I replied. "It must have tumbled down somewhere and it will appear behind the cushions on the sofa."

The party had been on Monday night.

All Tuesday passed

All Wednesday passed.

No one found the cigarette-box, a fairly solid affair which was a wedding present to my husband, with the family crest upon it.

Thursday and Friday passed, and on Friday night feeling it was about time to make some move, I wrote to the Insurance people to say it had disappeared, although I still hoped it would turn up. They received that letter on Saturday morning. Apparently they rushed off to the Lloyds Policy, and as their letter was handed to me, a brown paper parcel which had come by post was also handed in. The brown paper parcel contained the cigarette-box. It had an 8d. stamp upon it, the Postal District was unreadable, the writing was in printed characters, and there was no mark whatever to show where it had come from, or how, for it was not registered.

A strange coincidence that the Lloyds letter and the cigarette-box should turn up at the same moment, and a stranger coincidence that this large silver mass should have walked itself off for five days.

How? When? Where? Why?

Someone suggested that as it had been taken from the balcony, a lady had slipped it under her cloak, while looking at the moon. Someone else had suggested that a man had put it under his dress coat. (He couldn't. It was too big.)

The mystery of the cigarette-box remains. It was returned intact, minus cigarettes, and up to now I still possess it.

* * * * *

This chapter cannot be brought to a conclusion without quoting the truly remarkable letter received from the great announcer, with the deep voice, red coat and medals galore.

"Dear Madam,

"I thank you for your cheque and would like to add that to me it is very great pleasure in announcing at any of your Receptions, as you always have the prime of Society, and further a popular Hostess is never forgotten why should then your party be anything but a great success, you want a rest now or you will be having a break down, and many thanks for your appreciation of my services.

"Yours truly."

A not less delightful effusion, in its very different way, came to me from a friend who is pleased to call herself chaffingly "your char" and who is one of the clever women I know :

"Wonderful Queen,

"I must send a few words of heartiest congratulations on your party; I am sure everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves from start to finish. You ought to have *heard* the remarks to me about your pictures; the word 'wonderful' occurring again and again. It really was wonderful. I don't think I have *ever* seen the balcony look so bewitching as it did last night; I wished it was really a *summer* night so that we could have sat there. If I may say so, and I hope I may without impertinence, I *loved* your dress. And what a beautiful old brocade. I suppose it would 'stand alone' as I've heard my grandmother say.

"I am sure you must be dead to the world to-day; I did nothing and am tired all over. Unfortunately I am going to the Opera. I subscribe this year and go every Thursday and love it.

"A lovely account in the D.T. this morning.

"Ever admiringly and gratefully,

"Your CHAR."

* * * * *

And so Big Ben rang out the morning hour of ONE. The night was over. The new day was already one hour old. The invitations had said

9.30 TO 1 O'CLOCK

but don't imagine that these figures had had much effect. The eager ones arrived long before 9.30 and the remainder, who were enjoying themselves, were still here in vast numbers.

ONE o'clock rang out. Big Ben—ONE, he said. Nobody stirred. The Zingari band was still busy, although the beer barrel was empty. There was nothing for it but "God save the King". But still my guests lingered, laughing and chatting, and looking at the moon, and already inviting themselves for "next year, please."

"Be off with you," said poor exhausted ME. "This is the fifth and the last, my friends. We have 150 lanterns still to take down and flags, so just you go home, please."

It was all good fun. But the remaining fifty guests had literally to be bundled off.

And, so—as Mr. Pepys used to say—"And so to bed."

If I've amused you, I'm happy.

If I've pleased you, I'm glad.

If I've hurt you, I'm sorry.

If I've made mistakes, I apologize.

And let me ring down the curtain on a fourteen day Picture Show at Easter, 1932, of my sketches of China, Manchuria and Japan, at Arthur Tooth's Gallery in Bond Street, arranged by invitation in eight hours and opened in eight days. Exactly thirteen years after I started with four brushes and 20s. worth of paints.

PS. That was in

MARCH.

PSS. APRIL. This book first appeared.

PSSS. MAY. Invited to go on the Films.

PSSSS. JUNE. A new Edition of this volume, and asked to write a thesis for a Cremation Conference.

All this in 1932, after I had restarted my life in London in the Autumn of 1926. So after all it *had* been worth while trying again.

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